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"Noble" Tlaxcalans: Race and Ethnicity in Northeastern New Spain, 1770-1810

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**"Noble" Tlaxcalans: Race and Ethnicity in Northeastern New
Spain, 1770-1810**

by

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This dissertation reconstructs how one late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century northern Mexican indigenous community, San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, gave meaning to their world. San Esteban was home to Tlaxcalans who resettled from central New Spain in 1591. Although other works allude to the importance of the Tlaxcalans who populated this region, there has been little detailed historical research about their activities and the impact they had on colonial society. My work provides the most thorough analysis yet of this community by utilizing a rich array of Spanish-language sources by and about the Tlaxcalans of Coahuila, including legal cases, criminal records, parish birth, marriage and burial records, census data, testaments, and municipal records. Although colonial scholars who have used native-language sources helped reshape our understanding of indigenous life and culture, we must also consider

official documentation and the voluminous Spanish-language resources produced by indigenous people in order to gain a more complete understanding of how indigenous people viewed and interacted with the colonial world. These sources are especially important as, unlike many other indigenous communities, most documents produced by the Tlaxcalans of San Esteban in the late colonial period are in Spanish. This research thus indicates that Tlaxcalans actively questioned colonial policies, but Tlaxcalan elites also forged alliances with Spaniards both to help their own interests and those of the community. In addition, Tlaxcalans vehemently defended the noble status first given to them by the king in exchange for their help in conquering the northern provinces. This defense of communal rights and status ideology became part of their ethnic identity. Consequently, the Tlaxcalan elites' behavior ultimately both challenged and helped facilitate Spanish colonial rule. Moreover, by buying into Spanish notions of race and status Tlaxcalans supported this society's racial hierarchy.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation reconstructs how the indigenous community of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala gave meaning to their world at the end of the colonial period. San Esteban was located in the northeastern provinces of New Spain, in the modern-day state of Coahuila. It was the site of a sixteenth century colonization project designed by Spanish authorities to help pacify nomadic groups who made it almost impossible for the area to be economically viable for European settlers. Hence, the Tlaxcalans migrated from their native home in central Mexico and remained in the north for centuries as a coherent group.¹

My work provides a thorough analysis of the community of San Esteban by utilizing a rich array of Spanish-language sources by and about the Tlaxcalans of Coahuila, including legal cases, criminal records, parish birth, marriage and burial records, census data, testaments, and municipal records. Although there are Nahuatl-language documents available with which to study Tlaxcalan society, they are primarily for the period prior to the mid-eighteenth century. Thus, Spanish-language sources proved to be

the best way to develop an understanding of this indigenous society in the late colonial period. This study does not see Tlaxcalans as passive victims of European conquest, but neither did they remain unaffected by the colonization process. Tlaxcalans actively questioned colonial policies, but Tlaxcalan elites also forged alliances with Spaniards, both to help their own interests and that of the community. In addition, Tlaxcalans vehemently defended the noble status first given to them by the king in exchange for their help in developing settlements in the northern provinces. This defense of communal rights and status ideology became part of their identity. Hence, the Tlaxcalan elites' behavior both challenged and helped facilitate Spanish colonial rule. Moreover, by buying into Spanish notions of race and status Tlaxcalans supported this society's racial hierarchy.

The Tlaxcalan colonization project in the north has been discussed by a variety of scholars, but not in great detail. Charles Gibson's seminal study of Tlaxcala in the sixteenth century addressed this northern venture as part of the ongoing relationship between Tlaxcala and Spanish colonial authorities. He concludes that the privileges "given" to the Tlaxcalans when they offered the Spanish military aid had to be continuously negotiated.² David B. Adams' studies

¹ David Frye analyzes some of these modern-day Tlaxcalan communities in, *Indians into Mexicans: History and Identity in a Mexican Town* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

² Charles Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952).

on the Tlaxcalans in the north and on the township of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala are the most thorough studies yet on this settlement, but even these only provide a cursory analysis of San Esteban and the impact they had on northern society.³ Elizabeth Butzer's recent social history of a Tlaxcalan community in Nuevo León also makes a notable contribution to this scholarship.⁴ Other historical studies on these northern communities speculate as to their role and place within Mexican society. Andrea Martínez-Baracs' work addresses how Tlaxcalan privileges benefited them, but she concurrently surmises that the Tlaxcalans of San Esteban lost much of their biological identity and that "the essence of their 'community' was historic."⁵ Thus, she argues that Tlaxcalans maintained their identity because of the privileges and sovereignty given to them by the Crown. In her study of San Esteban testaments, Leslie Offutt notes that the language in these records reflected an increasing awareness by Tlaxcalans of the

³ David B. Adams, "Borderland Communities in Conflict: Saltillo, San Esteban, and the Struggle for Municipal Autonomy, 1591-1838," *Locus* 6:1 (1993): 39-51; "Embattled Borderlands: Northern Nuevo León and the Indios Barbaros, 1686-1870," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 95 (1991): 205-220; *Las colonial tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila y Nuevo León en la Nueva España: Un aspecto de la colonización del norte de México* (Saltillo: Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, 1991); "The Tlaxcalan Colonies of Spanish Coahuila and Nuevo León: An Aspect of the Settlement of Northern Mexico," Ph.D. Dissertation. The University of Texas at Austin, 1971; Eugene Sego includes a chapter on San Esteban in his study. It is primarily based on secondary works, such as David B. Adams'. *Aliados y adversarios: los colonos septentrional de Nueva España* (San Luis Potosí: El Colegio de San Luis, 1998).

⁴ Elizabeth K. Butzer, *Historia social de una comunidad tlaxcalteca: San Miguel de Aguayo (Bustamante, Nuevo León), 1686-1820* (Bustamante, N.L.: Presidencia Municipal de Bustamante, 2001).

⁵ Andrea Martínez-Baracs. "Colonizaciones Tlaxcaltecas," *Historia Mexicana* xliii: 2 (1993): 230.

Spanish world.⁶ Her research thus supports this dissertation's conclusion that residents of San Esteban were keenly aware of events taking place around them and had increasing contact with outsiders in the eighteenth century. This was certainly not a closed-off community. In his anthropological analysis of Mexquitic, San Luis Potosí, another northern Tlaxcalan community, David Frye discusses the importance that historical interpretation had on identity formation in these Tlaxcalan settlements.⁷ Although most of these works speculate over whether the Tlaxcalans gained any advantages by forging an alliance with Spanish authorities, they do not question how the contact itself influenced Tlaxcalan identity formation and the community in general. I would argue that this relationship or pact between Tlaxcalans and Spanish authorities deeply affected Tlaxcalan ethnic identity and consequently also determined what types of choices they made.

Ethnic Identity

This study argues that as Tlaxcalans came into closer contact with other social groups in the late colonial period, conflicts developed over the use of land and resources. As a result, Tlaxcalans grew weary of outsiders and reinforced the social boundaries that defined them as a special or

⁶ Leslie Offutt, "Levels of Acculturation in Northeastern New Spain: San Esteban Testaments of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Estudios de Cultura Nahuatl* 22 (1992): 409-443.

⁷ David Frye, *Indians into Mexicans*.

distinct community deserving of privileges and protection from Spanish colonial authorities.⁸ Thus, their re-identification with their ethnic group was not due to isolation or because they believed they could live in a closed-off community. They identified with an ethnic community because they were keenly aware of conditions and changes taking place around them and thus they sought to protect themselves by identifying with their self-defined group. Moreover, ethnicity is developed through the interplay between broader social beliefs and ideas, as well as human agency. The process of ethnic identity formation is not static or achieved; it is constantly being redefined. It is an ongoing dialogue amongst communities and between subordinate and ruling social groups.

Frederik Barth argues that it is not the internal dimensions of ethnicity that are of necessary importance, but the boundaries erected by groups as a result of interaction amongst them. In recent years his theories regarding ethnic identity have found greater resonance for current scholars of indigenous societies.⁹ Perhaps this is because his ideas capture the interrelated nature of identity formation and the fact that ethnic groups did not disappear as communities came into closer contact with one another.¹⁰

It is worth emphasizing that this study is primarily concerned with

⁸ For a discussion on his notion of ethnic boundaries, see Frederik Barth, "Introduction," *Ethnic groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969).

⁹ See Kevin Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*; Ana María Alonso, *Thread of Blood*.

analyzing ethnic boundaries or the political identity of the Tlaxcalans; not the internal dynamics of ethnicity. An individual's everyday, lived identity is much more complex and fluid. It is affected by a multitude of factors and is not the primary focus of this study. What is of concern is how Tlaxcalans chose to use terms like "noble" in public documents, how they fought to retain such a status, and what notions regarding noble status said about this community's understanding of their place in these northern territories. This analysis thus seeks to understand Tlaxcalan life and culture and how social, economic, and political forces shaped these dynamics.

The eighteenth century was a time when market forces deeply affected indigenous communities. What effect did this have on ethnicity? Was it the case that as society became more driven by a market economy that ethnicity and ethnic affiliation amongst indigenous groups was less influential?¹¹ In actuality, for some indigenous communities the opposite was true. As the market system placed greater pressures on indigenous groups, ethnic affiliation became more important because it was the primary way in which they protected the self-defined groups' interests. In addition, as the colonial state became stronger, ethnicity served as a way

¹⁰See John Rex, *Race and Ethnicity* (Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press, 1986).

¹¹ See Steve Stern's, *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest: Huamanga to 1640* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

in which groups sheltered themselves from increasingly negative Bourbon policies that interfered in their lives. The growing market system did not erase ethnicity. Instead, the growing state and increasingly competitive economic system only triggered greater competition amongst groups and created more defined ethnic and class divisions in society. However, for most of the colonial period the state was relatively weak. This did not imply that colonial policies did not have an impact on people's lives- even in the rural northern provinces.

In his recent study of popular participation in Mexico's Independence movement, Eric Van Young writes,

For people even to conceive of the state, or of its active intervention in altering social distribution of wealth or property, they are required to have a cognitive map that includes a view of a wider world beyond locality, and of the integuments that hold it together. For much of the population of late colonial Mexico, such a vision did not - could not- exist, and to assume its presence is anachronistic. What seemed to have mattered most to the vast majority of rural people was not the state, but community.¹²

It is my contention that peasants did not need to have a concept of the state to be influenced by its actions. The residents of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala may have fought to preserve their community's lands and rights, but they were not closed off. Indeed, at the end of the colonial period they

¹² Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001): 442.

reached out to their parent community in central New Spain when they needed assistance to stave off political and economic changes that threatened their way of life. Furthermore, it is especially difficult to understand the process of ethnic identity formation without taking into account the historical impact that state policies had on indigenous communities. I argue that the Tlaxcalans' pact with the colonial state, that they would help colonize the north in exchange for special privileges, deeply affected this northern society and the process of identity formation.¹³ Anthropologist Joanne Rappaport emphasizes this concept when she writes about indigenous groups in Colombia,

Indigenous identity in Latin America can only be understood in relation to the dominant society...It has become a truism to make this assertion in anthropological writing. Nevertheless, it bears restatement from a variety of vantage points. First, the historical depth of this relationship is frequently passed over by ethnographers who have not carefully traced the paths by which cultural forms evolve in relation to the dominant society. Second, it is precisely by articulating their cultural, intellectual, and political agendas within a practice that locates indigenous demands and projects in relations of equivalence with that

¹³ Cynthia Radding refers to this relationship between indigenous communities in Sonora and Spanish authorities as a "colonial pact." She writes, "The colonial pact signifies the political ties between the Spanish Crown and Indian communities through which the communities asserted certain basic claims to their means of livelihood and to a degree of local autonomy for their internal governance. Indigenous community leaders understood this relationship as begin regulated by a reciprocal arrangements through which Indians provided labor for Spanish enterprises and auxiliary warriors for military defense in return for protection from enslavement and the loss of village lands. Such a pact could not be assumed nor was it consistently observed; rather, it had to be negotiated and tenaciously defended over two centuries of colonial rule." "The Colonial Pact and Changing Ethnic Frontiers in Highland Sonora, 1740-1840," In *Contested Ground: Comparative Frontiers on the Northern and Southern Edges of the Spanish Empire*, edited by Donna J. Guy and Thomas E. Sheridan (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998): 53.

of other social movements in opposition to the overwhelming power of the state that indigenous public intellectuals are forging a pluralist politics in relation to their allies. Since the colonial period of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries when the population of indigenous communities in what is today Colombia was decimated by disease and war, and then was regrouped into urban units and isolated from colonial society in order to ensure the population's availability as a source of labor and its undivided attention directed at resident Catholic missionaries, indigenous identity has existed in relation to the dominant society.¹⁴

The Tlaxcalans' relationship with the state, as well as with other sectors of society shaped who they were and their political culture.¹⁵ Furthermore, when Tlaxcalans (as well as other groups) participated with the Spaniards in their attempts to pacify the region, this kept them from developing strategic relationships with other communities and might have hindered the development of cross-ethnic associations that could have coalesced into a broader movement against the colonial order. Indeed, Spanish authorities' alliances with different indigenous communities deeply divided colonial society.¹⁶ Spaniards learned how to use pre-existing animosities amongst groups to facilitate rule. Yet, this does not imply that

¹⁴ Joanne Rappaport, "Redrawing the Nation: Indigenous Intellectuals and Ethnic Pluralism in Contemporary Colombia," In *After Spanish Rule: Post Colonial Predicaments in the Americas*. Edited by Mark Thurner and Andrés Guerrero (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003): 313-314.

¹⁵ E.P. Thompson defines political culture as the "expectations, traditions, and, indeed, superstitions of the working population most frequently involved in actions in the market; and the relations –sometimes negotiations– between crown and rulers..." *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York: The New Press, 1993): 260.

¹⁶ See Cynthia Radding, *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700-1850* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

indigenous people could not have chosen a different path or that they did not play an active role in shaping this society.¹⁷ It does mean that their ability to unite across ethnic lines was severely hampered. Groups were unwilling to create alliances with neighboring communities because they feared they would be mistreated by Spaniards or would be given less land or other resources. Thus, without an assessment of state policies and their historic impact on indigenous communities one might erroneously assume that indigenous people's apparent isolationism approximated "something approaching racist beliefs...towards non-native groups."¹⁸ Indigenous people's behavior could hardly be considered racist in light of their history in colonial Latin America.

Scholars note that in marginal areas of Spanish America (like Central America and other peripheral regions) the state was relatively weak. Consequently, it relied on local officials and developed ways to play one entity off each other.¹⁹ Spanish authorities took advantage of pre-existing linguistic and cultural differences, as well as animosities

¹⁷ Ana María Alonso writes, "The construction of ethnicity and the definition of state policy were also products of the actions of social groups on the frontier. The efforts of mixed bloods and Hispanicized 'Indians' to exploit opportunities for access to honor and to 'bleach' themselves contributed to the redefinition of the inscription of ethnicity." *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995): 71.

¹⁸ Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion*, 474.

¹⁹ See Marc Macleod, "The Primitive Nation State, Delegations of Functions, and Results: Some Examples from Early Colonial Central America," In *Essays in the Political Economic and Social History of Colonial Latin America*, edited by Karen Spalding (Newark: University of Delaware, 1982).

amongst ethnic groups and used these to their advantage. In his analysis of Oaxacan rural society Ronald Spores points out that,

Societal conflict throughout the colonial period involved vertical, rather than horizontal, cleavages in Oaxacan rural society. Disputes were far more frequent between Indian communities (usually over lands or scarce resources), between caciques and communities, or between two or more caciques than between Indians and Spaniards.²⁰

Although his analysis deals with southern Mexico, in her study of northern indigenous groups Susan Deeds also documents how the state maintained order by playing one community against another. She writes,

The ability of Spaniards to exploit previous Indian enmities and enlist Indian allies was another important factor affecting the outcome of first-wave revolts. The Acaxes supported the Spaniards in the Xixime revolt. At first the Tepehuanes attracted such broad support from old enemies and maintained such internal cohesion that their rebellion had the most potential for obliterating the Spanish presence in Nueva Vizcaya, but by 1617 Spaniards were able to erode that support through a combination of force and gifts.²¹

Indigenous groups in the north had long-standing animosities that were exacerbated by their relationship with Spanish authorities. The

²⁰ Ronald Spores, "Differential Responses to Colonial Control among the Mixtecs and Zapotecs of Oaxaca," In *Native Resistance and the Pax Colonial in New Spain*, edited by Susan Schroeder (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998): 45.

²¹ Susan Deeds, "First Generation Rebellions in Seventeenth-Century Nueva Vizcaya," In *Native Resistance and the Pax Colonial in New Spain*, edited by Susan Schroeder (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998): 28; On this same subject Murdo Macleod writes, The Crown rewards and exempts in return for loyalty and support. It becomes the interest of the exempted classes to suppress those who do not share in these privileges, i.e. to help the state in its task of maintaining

Conchos in Nueva Vizcaya, for example, served as auxiliaries for Spaniards who helped them fight against unfriendly native groups.²² Indeed, in the northern region of Chihuahua this distinction, between ally and enemy, was usually made along cultural lines.²³ Hence, sedentary groups would not be treated like nomadic groups who were engaged in long-standing wars with Spaniards.

Because the Tlaxcalans agreed to help colonize northeastern New Spain they had a different status in the region. They were indigenous peoples, but concurrently they were also “civilized” conquerors. Ethnicity was therefore not developed just along ethnic/racial lines. Spanish authorities were primarily interested in pacifying groups they considered to be “savages” or “barbarians,” like the Apaches, and thus they treated the sedentary Tlaxcalans differently. Ana María Alonso argues that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Tarahumaras and Apaches resisted Spanish attempts at colonization. Consequently, this “shaped a ‘barbarous’ state policy that posited the social exclusion of

social control over potentially hostile groups.” “The Primitive Nation State, Delegations of Functions, and Results: Some Examples for Early Colonial Central America,” 57.

²² Susan Deeds goes on to say, “In all the rebellions, Conchos (whose role in Nueva Vizcaya was similar to that of the Tlaxcalans in New Spain) served as Spanish auxiliaries as well as rebels. The Spanish policy of recruiting native soldiers was always most significant in the early period of contact when Spanish numbers were relatively small. Inerrecine warfare was certainly not eliminated by Spanish colonialism, as so often happened when Europeans expanded, indigenous warfare was transformed to serve the intruders’ interests.” “First Generation Rebellions in Seventeenth-Century Nueva Vizcaya,” 28.

²³ Ana María Alonso, *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico’s Northern Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995): 59.

Indians through their destruction or containment in social enclaves and made Indianness ideologically other.”²⁴ Therefore, the northern Tlaxcalans vehemently fought to preserve their noble/*hidalgo* status so that they would not be treated as nomadic peoples. Nomadic groups were captured in “just” wars and (if they were not killed) they had to work for Spaniards as punishment for their rebelliousness against the Spanish state. These colonial policies encouraged groups to remain focused on protecting their particular community’s concerns and to distance themselves from another group’s struggles.

The study of indigenous identity formation has been a focus of study in recent works on the northeastern provinces of New Spain. Although earlier scholarship on this region tended analyzed civil and religious institutions, recent studies address a multitude of historical topics. Works that discuss Spanish and mixed society in the north include Leslie Offutt’s study of Saltillo, Cheryl English Martin’s and Chantal Cramaussel’s on Chihuahua, and Jesús F de la Tejas’s on San Antonio.²⁵ Cecilia Sheridan’s study of the interaction between northern tribes and Spanish society in colonial Coahuila analyzed the impact violence had on

²⁴Ana María Alonso, *Thread of Blood*, 71.

²⁵Leslie Offutt, *Saltillo, 1770-1810: Town and Region in the Mexican North* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001); Cheryl English Martin, *Governance and Society in Colonial Mexico: Chihuahua in the Eighteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Chantal Cramaussel, *Provincia de Santa Barbara en Nueva Vizcaya, 1563-1631* (Chihuahua: Universidad

the everyday lives of settlers.²⁶ Ana María Alonso and Susan Deeds both broached the topic of identity formation, but for different time periods. Susan Deeds' recent work analyzes relations between nomads, Spaniards and *casta* groups, as well as the development of ethnic identity amongst the nomadic peoples of Nueva Vizcaya in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Deeds' primary concern is to understand how demographic changes and labor relations affected ethnic identity. She argues that the groups that survived and retained their identity did so because they relocated to areas that were fairly isolated and did not have much contact with Spanish settlers. Although this might hold true for the seventeenth century, this does not seem to be a reason why the community of San Esteban, for example, survived and retained a sense of ethnic consciousness through the end of the colonial period. The residents of San Esteban, for example, lived very close to non-indigenous settlers and their town was adjacent to the Spanish settlement of Satalillo. Deeds does not consider why some indigenous groups retained an ethnic cohesiveness in the eighteenth century when they had greater contact with non-native peoples, nor what impact the presence of transplanted sedentary groups had on the process of indigenous identity formation (or even on the

Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez, 1990); Jesús F. de la Teja, *San Antonio de Bexar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

²⁶ Cecilia Sheridan, *Anónimos y desterrados: la contienda por el 'sitio que llaman Quauyla' (siglos svi-sviii)* (México: CIESAS, 2000).

extinction of nomadic groups). In the region currently under analysis people seemed to have greater interaction with other nearby (and sometimes far off) areas, as well as with travelers passing through the region. This aspect of peasant life has not been given adequate attention.

Indeed, scholars note that indigenous people had an almost obsessive interest in the indigenous village and thus use this as further evidence to suggest that indigenous people had a very localistic view.²⁷ At least in the north, indigenous people traveled to sell their wares and for other reasons. Moreover, the town of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala sent members of the community to other regions to establish settlements throughout Nueva Vizcaya, Coahuila and Nuevo León. In addition, royal edicts were issued requiring indigenous people to carry a passport when they traveled, thus indicating that colonial authorities wanted to control their behavior and that movement was taking place.²⁸ Many indigenous groups fought to keep their lands and to maintain their ethnic identity because they were affected by and were aware of the changes taking place

²⁷ Eric van Young refers to this as *campanilismo* or "...the tendency of villagers to see the social and political horizon as extending metaphorically only as far as the view from their church bell tower..." *The Other Rebellion*, 483-484.

²⁸ William Taylor writes, "The fierce corporate identity of many land holding villages was inevitably inconsistent with the peasant condition within the imperial system, sometimes sharply so. Peasants' strongest allegiances were to community and family, but these local groups were never entirely closed or isolated from the larger social order." *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979): 27; On the notion of interaction amongst groups and missions in the north, see Susan Deeds, *Defiance and Deference in Mexico's Colonial North*.

around them.²⁹ Indigenous people did appear to lack an “overreaching identification with any entity beyond the local *cah* (*altepetl* or indigenous pueblo)”, but this did not mean that they did not have contact with outsiders or did not increasingly leave their villages to find work in larger cities at the end of the colonial period.³⁰ It is cultural assignments and constraints on individual choices that shape people’s lives.

Rebellions

The study of indigenous political culture and ethnicity also informs our understanding of rebellions and insurrections in Spanish America (or the lack of them).³¹ Although scholars indicate that New Spain was not characterized by widespread rebellions after the initial contact period, they have noted that indigenous peoples did rebel if and when they were pushed by local authorities. In the eighteenth century indigenous groups rose up for a variety of reasons; they did so when they were unfairly taxed

²⁹ Frederik Barth argues that if ethnic groups remain it not because of isolation, but because of the constant interaction amongst ethnic groups of unequal power. “Introduction,” In *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 9-38.

³⁰ Kevin Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 330; On the migration of indigenous women from local villages to Mexico City at the end of the colonial period, see Juan Javier Pescador’s, “Vanishing Woman: Female Migration and Ethnic Identity in Late-Colonial Mexico City,” *Ethnohistory* 42:2 (fall 1995): 617-626.

³¹ William Taylor writes, “Both [rebellion and insurrection] are violent political acts, but rebellions are localized mass attacks, generally limited to restoring a customary equilibrium. They do not offer new ideas or a vision of a new society. Insurrection, on the other hand, are regional in scope, constitute part of a broader political struggle between various segments of society, and aim at a reorganization of relationships between communities and powerful outsiders.” *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages*, 114.

and when local officials overstepped their jurisdictional boundaries. In the latter half of the colonial period some groups rioted when the Jesuits were expelled and because of Bourbon policies which imposed new rules and regulations.³²

Nevertheless, there is scant evidence to suggest that Tlaxcalans in the north ever took up arms against Spanish colonial authorities. They helped fight off nomadic attacks as part of their contract with Spanish officials, but did not attack local government officials. Why was this the case? One explanation for this might be that we simply have not found the sources that document these rebellions. Even so, after considering voluminous amounts of documentation about the Tlaxcalans from the town of San Esteban, but also from surrounding areas like Parras and Los Alamos, there is no evidence to suggest that Tlaxcalans rose up against local authorities or the colonial state. There are a variety of reasons why this might have been the case. Tlaxcalan identity was deeply tied to notions of being “civilized” conquerors. Thus, this in itself might have stunted the possibility of a violent reaction to colonial policies. Although other indigenous communities increasingly rioted to protest the local implementation of state policies (Bourbon reforms) at the end of the

³² See William Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion*; Friedrich Katz, ed. *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); John Tutino, *From Insurrection to Revolution: Social Bases of Agrarian Violence, 1750-1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

colonial period, Tlaxcalans seemingly reacted through some forms of passive resistance or through legal channels- which was the primary way they had reacted historically. In addition, colonial authorities may have been more than willing to negotiate with the Tlaxcalans because they were necessary allies who justified their behavior towards other indigenous groups in the north. Consequently, Tlaxcalan threats of violence might have been all that was needed when problems and tensions arose amongst these groups. The expulsion of the Jesuit Order in 1767, another act that provoked popular protest in other regions, did not directly affect the community of San Esteban, as they were served by the Franciscans. The Jesuit mission was located in Parras. Indeed, indigenous insurrection was especially improbable because of this indigenous group's historic relationship with the state and their identification with an ethnic group. Tlaxcalans fought to protect the group's rights because this limited agenda served them best, yet by identifying culturally with their own group they did not form alliances with other indigenous or mixed caste peoples. This reduced the possibility of developing more widespread movements against the colonial state.

Sources and Method

This study was influenced not just by works on peasant rebellions, but by scholarship concerning indigenous societies in the Americas. These analyses directly shaped my use of sources. Therefore, this historiography is worth discussing in greater detail. Initially, studies on indigenous society chronicled the conflict that erupted between Indians and Europeans during initial contact phase in the sixteenth century. Later, Robert Ricard focused less on conflict, but on the displacement of indigenous institutions by European ones. Ricard primarily used institutional Spanish-language documents, which consequently influenced his analysis. Charles Gibson's study of Tlaxcala changed the direction of the study of indigenous peoples and showed that many indigenous elements were able to survive those initial years of contact between native groups and Europeans. Until this point, scholars primarily used Spanish-language sources to tell the story of native groups.³³ It was James Lockhart's work and those of his students that developed a more complex analysis of indigenous peoples by using native-language records to study their life and culture, thus showing that native society was vibrant and ever changing. Lockhart argued that, "language itself turns out to be an

³³ For a discussion of the aforementioned literature, see James Lockhart, "Introduction," *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

irreplaceable vehicle for determining the nature and rate of general cultural evolution.”³⁴ Although it would have been preferable to study Tlaxcalan life in the north by utilizing Nahuatl-language documents, this was not possible. Because my work focuses on analyzing the lives of Tlaxcalans in the north during the eighteenth century, a majority of the sources produced by the community are in Spanish.³⁵ Despite of this fact, the Spanish-language documents produced by the residents of San Esteban tell us much about their world-view and concerns. James Lockhart thus acknowledges the difficulties faced by scholars and the realities of archival research when he writes,

This is not to say that sources in Spanish lack value for Nahua history. Rarely does one find in the archives a whole dossier in Nahuatl. Rather a dossier with Nahuatl documentation usually contains one, two, or at most a few items in Nahuatl, presented as primary evidence, whereas the whole lawsuit with its explanatory apparatus is in Spanish. It would be self-defeating not to take advantage of the context...I have no doubt, however, that the history of Nahuas can profit greatly from further research in relevant purely Spanish sources.³⁶

Every attempt was made to use a variety of documents by and about the residents of San Esteban. Petitions and land titles, for example, were

³⁴ Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest*, 8.

³⁵ There are Tlaxcalan testaments for the town of San Esteban that are in Nahuatl. By the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries most of these are in Spanish. Leslie S. Offutt, “Levels of Acculturation in Northeastern New Spain: San Esteban Testaments of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 22 (1992): 409-443.

³⁶ Lockhart, 8-9.

complemented with census data and parish records. Further research on this topic will include an analysis of *cofradía*, notary and testament records.

Furthermore, the works of E.P. Thompson, James C. Scott, as well as Joan Scott's analysis of gender also influenced this study's method (despite of the fact that gender is not a focus of analysis throughout the dissertation). Their attempt to include culture along with the study of economics in order to understand social change clearly shaped my own views regarding historical analysis. Yet, this study does not negate the fact that material forces restricted the choices that were available to indigenous people, but the primary concern is to locate indigenous people's interpretation of social change, as it was this realm that shaped their political world.³⁷ It is through the inclusion of new research, as well as divergent viewpoints and methodologies that we come to a deeper understanding of the human condition. I would thus concur with Joan Scott when she argues for the inclusion of gender as a category of analysis. She writes,

I make no claim to a total vision, nor to having found the category that will finally explain all inequality, all

³⁷ See John Leddy Phelan, *The People and the King: The Comunero Revolution in Colombia, 1781* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); William Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages*; Sarah C. Chambers, *From Subjects to Citizens: Honor, Gender, and Politics in Arequipa, Peru, 1780-1854* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); Ward Stavig, *The World of Tupac Amaru: Conflict, Community, and Identity in Colonial Peru* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

oppression, all history. My claim is more modest: that gender offers both a good way of thinking about history, about the ways in which hierarchies of difference-inclusions and exclusions- have been constituted, and of theorizing (feminist) politics. Such an admission of partiality it seems to be, does not acknowledge defeat in the search for a universal explanation; rather it suggests that universal explanation is not, never has been possible. Indeed, it turns critical attention to the politics (that is, the power dynamics) of ‘totality’ whether advanced as (mono) casual analysis or master narrative whether invoked by historians or political activists.³⁸

Organization of Study

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter, “Tlaxcalan Settlement in Northern New Spain,” provides a general introduction to the history of the Tlaxcalans in central New Spain and the resettlement of Tlaxcalan peoples in the north.

Chapter Two, “Political Life,” analyzes Tlaxcalan and Spanish political government in the towns of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala and Saltillo. These indigenous and Spanish settlements were situated next to one another and arguably neither of these towns’ histories can be told without referencing the other. This chapter suggests that Tlaxcalan political life was shaped by government ritual, which helped Spanish colonial authorities rule. Yet, local Spanish authorities often had to

³⁸ Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988): 10.

negotiate with the Tlaxcalans and developed compromises with this settlement.

The primary goal of Chapter Three, “Petitions and Legal Disputes,” is to analyze the language and purpose of Tlaxcalan petitions and local disputes so as to understand the changes that affected this indigenous society, as well as how they reacted to them.

Chapter Four, “San Esteban’s ‘False Titles’,” attempts to decipher local custom through an analysis of indigenous land titles. These land title documents are also relevant for my broader argument as they emerged with greater frequency in the latter half of the colonial period and thus help to illustrate the increasing number of conflicts between indigenous villages, local landowners and Spanish townships at this time. They illuminate the power struggle that dominated this eighteenth century society.

Chapter Five, “Race, Class and Gender,” uses census data and parish records to develop an understanding of how race, class, and gender intersected in the Spanish community of Saltillo in the late colonial period. It is through an exploration of how this regional enclave gave meaning to race, class and ethnicity that we can comprehend the Tlaxcalans’ perspective regarding ethnic identity, as these outside perceptions shaped the process of ethnic identity formation in San Esteban. Racial ideology

(or racism) and ethnicity are two interrelated concepts. It would be nonsensical to speak of indigenous ethnicity without concurrently discussing the broader culture and the Tlaxcalans' place within it.

Chapter Six, "Tlaxcalan Ethnic Identity," analyzes Tlaxcalan definitions of their own ethnic identity by examining how they used the term noble or *hidalgo* in public records. Although Tlaxcalans were given privileges and a noble status by Spanish authorities when they agreed to colonize the north, it was at the end of the colonial period that Tlaxcalans' fought to reinstate the rights that were associated with *hidalgo* status in colonial society. Thus, this dissertation argues that Tlaxcalans defended the noble status first given to them by the king in exchange for their help in conquering the northern provinces. This defense of communal rights and status ideology became part of their ethnic identity.

Chapter Seven, "Life in the Community of San Esteban," uses parish records for the township of San Esteban to examine how members of this indigenous community lived their lives. This research thus shows that Tlaxcalan elites forged alliances with Spaniards and hence had social contact with non-indigenous peoples. This counters previous scholarly assumptions about indigenous communities during the colonial period.

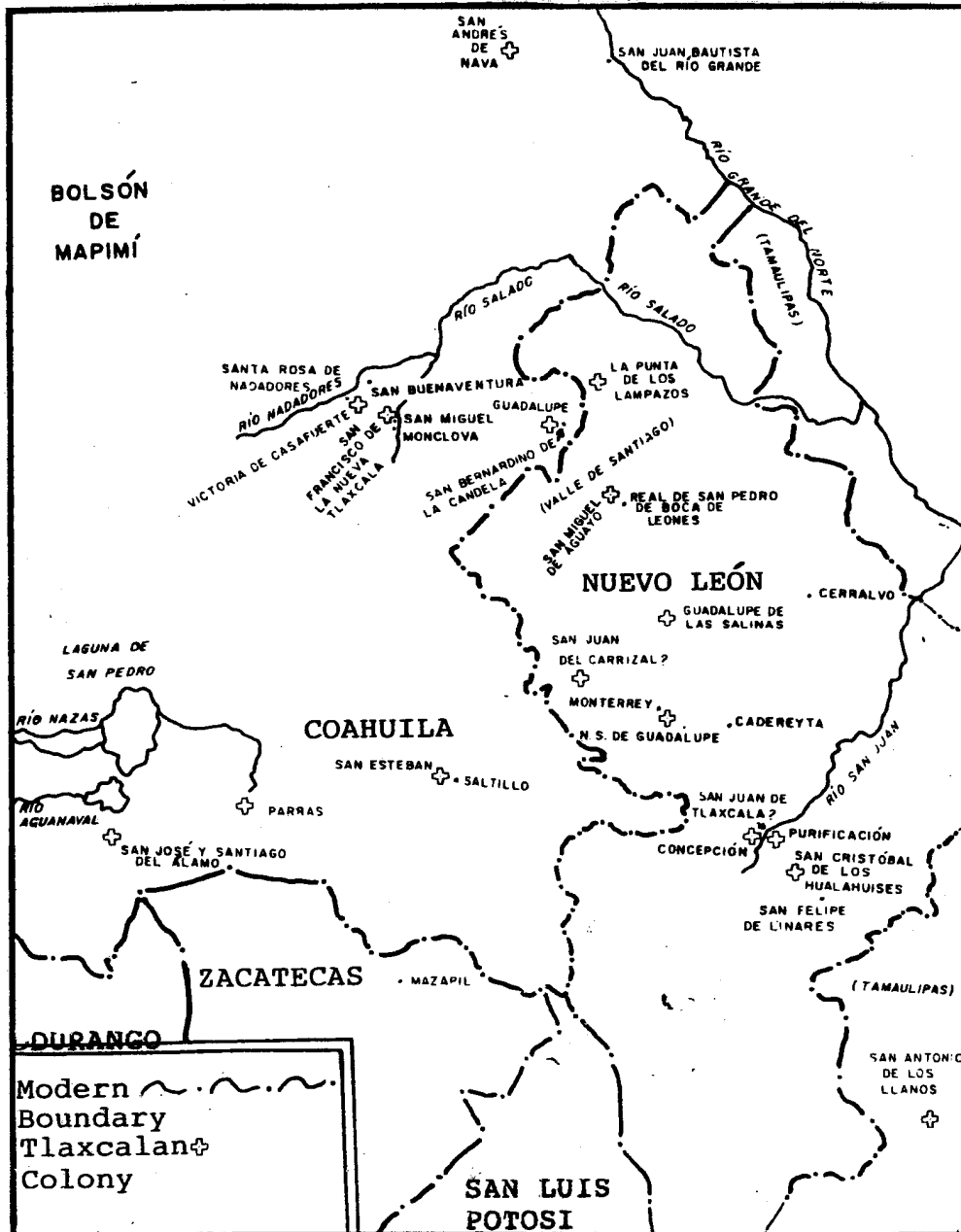
Chapter Eight, "Resistance and Adaptation," considers the Tlaxcalans' behavior during the Independence period (1810-1821). The

primary concern here was not simply to analyze indigenous rebellions (as there were no Tlaxcalan insurrections or riots), but to study indigenous political culture at this time. Indeed, as has been previously discussed, there is no evidence to suggest that Tlaxcalans planned to rebel in the time period under question or that they supported either the insurgent or royalist movement. This last chapter further speculates as to the reasons why Tlaxcalans did not resort to violence as a response to economic changes and Bourbon policies.

Map 1: Tlaxcalan Colonies in Northern Mexico

Map Appears in David B. Adams, *Las colonias tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila y Nuevo León en Nueva España* (Saltillo: Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, 1991): 121.

Changes made by the author.



Map 2: Settlement of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala

Map appears in Eugene B. Sego, *Aliados y adversarios: Los colonos tlaxcaltecas en la frontera septentrional de Nueva España* (San Luis Potosí: El Colegio de San Luis, 1998): 279. Changes made by the author.



Map 3: Saltillo and San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala at the end of the Eighteenth Century
Map appears in Sego, *Aliados y Adversarios*, 280. Changes made by the author.



CHAPTER 1

Tlaxcalan Migration and Settlement in Northern New Spain

Tlaxcalans played a pivotal role in the settlement of the northern provinces during the sixteenth century. They were able to bring a measure of stability to a region that had been ravaged by frontier wars with native communities of the north for most of this period.³⁹ The Spanish had hoped they could subdue these nomadic peoples and consequently use them to work in the silver mines. When this failed, colonial officials then embarked on a plan to "peacefully" settle the region through diplomacy and religious conversion. Out of this effort grew the mission system, but part of this plan also involved the introduction of sedentary indigenous groups to help with the colonization project. Royal officials wanted Tlaxcalans to serve as an example to the Chichimecas and other nomadic groups. In time, royal officials hoped these northern groups would be incorporated into Tlaxcalan society or form sedentary communities of their own. Although the residents of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala tried to emulate their parent colony in the north, Tlaxcalan society and culture was shaped by the very frontier they

³⁹ On the Chichimeca Wars see, Philip Wayne Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver: The Northward Advance of New Spain, 1550-1600* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1952).

were trying to contain, but conversely Tlaxcalans also deeply influenced northern society.

Pre-Conquest Tlaxcalan Society and the Arrival of the Spanish

Indigenous groups of central Mexico are commonly referred to as the Aztecs, but this name mistakenly implies that they had a national unity. The Tlaxcalans shared a common culture and the Náhuatl language with other central Mexican indigenous peoples, yet they, along with other native communities, managed to retain a separate ethnic identity. In addition, pre-conquest indigenous groups of central New Spain were not unlike Spanish society in that they recognized different social ranks. The *pilli* or nobility stood atop their civilization, whereas commoners, or *macehualli*, made up the bulk of the population. *Maceguales* primarily lived off the land, but they also included merchants and craftsmen. They could also rise to be part of the nobility if they accumulated enough wealth. After the arrival of the Spanish there was less of an attempt to distinguish between commoners and the descendants of nobility, as colonial authorities did not want to give tribute exemptions. Commoners seemed to promote this change, as they wanted to have fewer obligations to their nobility.

In difficult times, commoners more often came to rely on Spanish leaders than on their own native rulers.⁴⁰

Tlaxcalan land-holdings were more corporate than they were communal. Households or individuals worked arable lands and thus could inherit this property. Individuals therefore could have their own plots of land, yet the corporate unit was involved in the management and sometimes the reallocation of such land. Authorities could not interfere if there were living relatives who inherited the plots and continued to work it. After the conquest indigenous *cabildos* or town councils continued to manage community lands even after independence.⁴¹

Native religion was highly complex and included many deities that were celebrated in festivities and processions. These gods gave unity to the *altepetl* (ethnic state) and temples built specifically for these entities came to symbolize its autonomy. Religion, therefore, was central to the sociopolitical unit.⁴² After the arrival of the Spanish many churches were in fact built on the same ground where pre-Columbian temples existed. This did not mean that native deities were displaced; they were instead incorporated into the pre-existing religious belief-system. James Lockhart writes:

⁴⁰ James Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992): 112-113.

⁴¹ Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest*, 142-163.

⁴² *Ibid*, 203-204.

For the people of pre-conquest Mesoamerica, victory was *prima facie* evidence of the strength of the victor's god. One expected a conqueror to impose his god in some fashion, without fully displacing one's own; the new god in any case always proved to be an agglomeration of attributes familiar from the local pantheon and hence easy to assimilate. Thus the Nahuas after the Spanish conquest needed less to be converted than to be instructed.⁴³

As the Tlaxcalans began to prosper they attracted the interest of other groups, like the Mexica (most commonly referred to as the Aztecs). Although there is evidence to suggest that the Mexicas and the Tlaxcalans may not have been enemies in prior times, by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries they were in a constant state of political and military strife.⁴⁴ A primary reason why the Mexicas may have been attracted to the region of Tlaxcala was because they developed extensive trade routes that allowed them to accumulate great wealth. The wars between these two groups may have thus started one hundred years before the arrival of the Spanish.⁴⁵ Moreover, the object of said conflict was neither to destroy nor defeat, but merely to "conquer" the area for a time. Yet, this constant struggle between the Tlaxcalans and the Montezuma dynasty left Tlaxcalans in a dire state by the time Cortés arrived in 1519.

As Cortés and his army advanced on to Tenochtitlan to wage battle against the Mexicas he had to contend with other indigenous groups, some of which believed that it was in their best interest to aid this new conqueror and a multitude

⁴³ Ibid, 203.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 1.

of others who fought to stop the Spaniard's advance. As Cortés arrived in the outskirts of Tlaxcala his native advisers from Zacatlán-Ixtacmaxtitlán warned him about them, as the guide believed the Tlaxalans would provide a formidable challenge to the Spaniards.⁴⁶ Neither his advisors nor Cortés knew about the deteriorated state of Tlaxcala. Yet, like many other indigenous groups the Tlaxalans believed that they could defeat the Spanish and stop their advance. Despite of their willingness to challenge the Spanish advance, the Tlaxcalans were defeated in their first battle. Tlaxcalans consequently began to wonder if they should surrender. After extensive debates between the four Tlaxcalan *cabecera* leaders it was decided that they would invite Cortés to enter the city in the fall of 1519, thus buying time to rebuild their forces and attack the Spaniards once again.⁴⁷ Although both sides claimed to have peaceful intentions, fighting ensued until it became evident to the Tlaxcalans that they could not defeat Cortés and his army. There was much disagreement amongst the Tlaxcalans, but in the end the elder *cabecera* leaders, Xicotencatl, and Maxixcatzin of Ocotelulco decided that they needed to bring peace to the region and thus decided that they would surrender.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Charles Gibson. *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952): 14.

⁴⁶ Gibson, 16.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 18.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 21.

Tlaxcalans therefore formed an alliance with the Spanish out of political and military expedience. They accompanied Cortés to Pánuco in 1522; Pedro de Alvarado to Guatemala in 1524; and Nuño de Guzmán to western Mexico.⁴⁹ This alliance appeared to closely tie the Tlaxcalans with the Spanish and also to give them certain privileges that should have elevated their status in comparison to other indigenous groups. Yet, these “privileges” only came after extensive negotiations between the Tlaxcalans and Spanish officials. Charles Gibson notes that the Tlaxcalans were able to derive some concessions because they had a “well-organized native government,” and quickly became versed in the intricacies of Spanish law.⁵⁰ Gibson writes,

...even the unquestionable military aid and the widely accepted tradition of Cortés' promise would hardly have been sufficient to inspire the later *fueros* of Tlaxcala. The fact is that privileges were granted in the Spanish world to those who took the pains to ask for them. If the Tlaxcalans themselves had not brought their conquest service to the king's attention, the king might never have been aware of them. If the Tlaxcalans had not campaigned for privileges, the privileges would not have been forthcoming.⁵¹

Hence, Tlaxcalans fought for and were able to attain a series of special rights and privileges, such as the suspension of tribute payments and noble status.⁵²

Indeed, even though Tlaxcalans were exempted from paying tribute for a time because of the military aid they gave to Cortés (as well as in other military

⁴⁹ Ibid, 23.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 63.

⁵¹ Ibid, 161.

campaigns) these rights were not guaranteed nor were the Tlaxcalans excluded from providing Spaniards with other services. For example, they were not given a wage for their military aid. They also paid the tithe to the church, worked for the religious orders, and helped construct municipal buildings.⁵³ One such service given by the Tlaxcalans was helping to colonize frontier regions of New Spain.

Northern New Spain

Before the arrival of the first European settlers in the region that today is referred to as Coahuila, it was populated by many nomadic indigenous groups. The primary or largest groups were the Coahuiltecan, Chichimeca and Guachichil Indians. The first explorers that came in contact with these groups in Coahuila and Texas did so in the 1530's. Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca's stories of great wealth initially aroused some interest in these northern enclaves, but by and large Europeans did not think the northeastern provinces were of great importance and thus did not plan major colonization projects for much of the sixteenth century. Unlike San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas, Coahuila did not have great mineral deposits, so Spaniards did not see the immediate economic importance of colonizing this area. As one Jesuit in Nueva Vizcaya bemoaned, "the Indians tended to be unbelievers...and because Spaniards had not found silver, they had

⁵² As evidence of the fact that Tlaxcalans struggled to gain certain rights from the Spanish government Charles Gibson notes that Tlaxalan privileges were not "given" to them immediately after the conquest. Royal edicts supporting these claims were issued from 1535-1585. Ibid, 169.

⁵³ Ibid, 170.

no interest in settling here."⁵⁴ This attitude would soon change with the discovery of the Zacatecas silver mines in 1546.⁵⁵

The relationship that Spanish colonial officials developed in the first half of the sixteenth century with native groups of the north was shaped by the European settler's primary goal: to extract valuable mineral deposits from the area. That was the main reason Spaniards initially began to travel along these northern territories. For the most part they were not able to make any major discoveries until silver was found in Zacatecas, Nueva Galicia in the mid sixteenth century. Consequently, Zacatecas attracted many hopeful settlers who dreamed of becoming instantaneously wealthy. Hence, the years 1549-50 saw the beginning of a serious Spanish migration north.

What followed in those years was an intensification of conflicts between Europeans and nomadic groups. In 1568 the new viceroy, Don Martín Enríquez de Almanza, began his twelve-year tenure. During this time his primary concern was the consolidation of Spain's military gains in the northern provinces.⁵⁶ The enslavement of Indians in fact appeared to be actively promoted by viceregal authorities that knew that settlements, farms, and silver mining endeavors could not prosper unless Spaniards had access to indigenous labor.⁵⁷ Officials also

⁵⁴ Vito Alessio Robles. *Coahuila y Texas en la Epoca Colonial*. 2nd. ed. (México: Porrúa, c.1938, 1978): 46.

⁵⁵ Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 105.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 109.

began to build a line of presidios and Spanish settlements along the Mexico-Zacatecas route. This policy was difficult and expensive to maintain. Soldiers had to be paid and Spanish settlers could not rely on the labor and agricultural production of indigenous groups who barely cultivated enough to sustain themselves.

The Villa de Santiago de Saltillo, located in the northern region of Nueva Vizcaya, was one such town that was founded as part of this early colonization project. It is unclear what specific purpose the Spanish settlement of Saltillo served, but it most likely was a defensive settlement against indigenous raids of mining towns. Saltillo was one of the first towns established in the northeastern part of Nueva Vizcaya (it became the southern part of Coahuila in 1786), yet it was not founded until 1577.⁵⁸ Saltillo's first settlers were in fact soldiers from Nueva Vizcaya. When the first permanent European settlers came it was most likely to take advantage of the fertile land. Those who did come to Saltillo probably hoped to profit from its proximity to rich mining regions, but these areas, like Durango and Zacatecas, could not support an agricultural and ranching economy.⁵⁹ Consequently, most Spaniards became farmers or ranchers during these early years and remained so throughout the colonial period. Saltillo's main purpose soon became to serve as a grainery for mining regions. Those initial

⁵⁸ José Cuello, "The Persistence of Indian Slavery and Encomienda in the Northeast of Colonial Mexico, 1577-1723," *Journal of Social History* 21:4 (summer 1988): 685.

⁵⁹ Alessio Robles, *Coahuila y Texas*, 86.

settlers faced a difficult existence as they lived amongst an unfriendly indigenous population.

An increasing number of Spaniards advanced into the northern provinces of New Spain in the sixteenth century searching for mineral wealth and thus they became involved in drawn out military engagements with the dozens of nomadic indigenous tribes that populated the area. What came to be referred to as the Chichimeca territory was an expansive region that was home to a variety of semi-nomadic tribes. They included the Pames, Gamares, Zacatecos, and Guachichiles. As could be expected, the more adamant the Spanish were in their attempt to establish permanent Spanish towns, the more they had to deal with indigenous reprisals. By the end of the 1560's, miners and Spanish priests pleaded with royal authorities so that decisive action would be taken to pacify these nomadic groups.

Although many continued to push for harsher policies to pacify the provinces, by the 1580s most believed that changes needed to be made in the method and approach taken by the Crown. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries officials had maintained military outposts in order to fight the wars against the Chichimecas (1550-1590), but officials decided that it would be less expensive and would not provoke indigenous groups as much if they supported a

mission system. The Orders of New Discovery issued in 1573, which called for a peaceful colonization strategy, also influenced this decision.⁶⁰

The new viceroy, Alonso Manrique de Zúñiga, arrived in New Spain in the fall of 1585 and consequently tried to end previous military and administrative policies that were clearly not helping colonial authorities accomplish their primary goal; to make the area safe enough for economic development to take place.⁶¹ The viceroy consolidated military administration under the hands of Diego Velasco, who now became the lieutenant captain of Nueva Vizcaya, Nuevo León, and Nueva Galicia. The viceroy also tried to stop corruption and over-spending by adopting more stringent accounting methods. He also hoped to end the capture of indigenous peoples for the purpose of enslavement. This last goal was not very successful, as the illegal enslavement of native peoples continued until the seventeenth century.⁶² Neither could he fully abandon the *presidio* system completely. The Viceroy's attempt to negotiate a peace settlement with the tribes in exchange for gifts, food, and clothing did prove to be somewhat more successful. Yet, the central focus of his new administration would be to encourage the development of permanent settlements along the Chichimeca

⁶⁰ Weber, David. *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992): 212.

⁶¹ Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 182-183.

⁶² Cuello, "Persistence of Indigenous Slavery"

territory. This colonization project included a plan to send Tlaxcalans to help establish towns that would in time incorporate nomadic groups.⁶³

The Tlaxcalans therefore entered the north, not as colonized peoples but as colonizers.⁶⁴ Because Spanish settlements in the 1500s still remained fairly small, by the end of the sixteenth century it was clear to these struggling Spanish enclaves that they needed to increase their numbers so they could better protect themselves against indigenous attacks that constantly threatened these frontier towns. Although northern settlers and colonial authorities might have preferred Spanish colonizers, they appeared to be equally satisfied with the thought of welcoming friendly and Christianized Tlaxcalans into the region.

Northern Tlaxcalan Settlements

After being petitioned by Spanish military personnel from the north who requested that Tlaxcalans be sent to their provinces, Viceroy Velasco asked for volunteers from Tlaxcala to help settle these territories. The Tlaxcalans would thus introduce Spanish governmental organization and Christianity. This would in turn help to convert and "civilize" the nomadic northern tribes. The Spanish expected that the Tlaxcalans would teach the Chichimeca and Guachichil Indians, as well as other northern tribes, about agriculture, animal management, the

⁶³ Primo Feliciano Velázquez, ed. *Colección de documentos para la historia de San Luis Potosí* (San Luis Potosí: Archivo Histórico de San Luis Potosí, 1985): 204.

⁶⁴ Andrea Martínez-Baracs, "Colonizaciones Tlaxcaltecas," *Historia Mexicana* 43 (1993): ?.

building of permanent homes, weaving, Christianity, and about monogamous family life.⁶⁵

Initially the viceroy did not receive a very enthusiastic response from Tlaxcala and evidently did not get any volunteers from the city. The Tlaxcalans had strong reservations about how this migration would take place. This northern journey created many problems for them. In practical terms, the Tlaxcalans worried about the safety of the women and children who would be asked to make this journey. How would they be protected? Would they even be able to undertake such a difficult endeavor? In particular, who would receive the lands and homes left behind by such a large number of people?⁶⁶ Although they had sent men to fight along with the Spanish before, they had never been asked to send whole families to be relocated and who would never return home. The Tlaxcalans only seriously began to consider this migration after prospects diminished in their homeland. By the 1580s and 1590s the Tlaxcalan economy had started to deteriorate. Consequently, Tlaxcalans began to seriously consider this migration. Eventually four-hundred and one families (or single men) were recruited for the colonization project and were relocated to areas such as San Luis Potosí, Zacatecas and Nueva Vizcaya. In 1591 the Tlaxcalans began their trek north.

⁶⁵ Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 183.

⁶⁶ Actas de Cabildo, acta del 15/6/1560. Andrea Martínez Baracs. "Colonizaciones Tlaxcaltecas," 203.

The four-hundred and one Tlaxcalan families that made the northern journey arrived in Cuicillo, Zacatecas, where they were assigned to five colonies by Rodrigo de Río de Loza, governor and military captain of the Nueva Vizcaya provinces. Captain Miguel Caldera had jurisdiction over San Miguel de Mizquitic (San Luis Potosí), San Andrés de Teúl (between Zacatecas and Durango), and San Luis Colotlán (Zacatecas). Captain Juan de la Hija led those that would reside in San Sebastián Agua del Venado (San Luis Potosí). Captain Francisco de Urdiñola, lieutenant governor and captain of the province of Nueva Vizcaya, was in charge of the Tlaxcalan settlement in the southern part of Nueva Vizcaya, which came to be called San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala.⁶⁷

Captain Francisco de Urdiñola played a significant role in organizing the Tlaxcalan settlement. He took eighty Tlaxcalan families to an area near the Spanish settlement of Saltillo where they joined twenty Spanish families. Captain Urdiñola's primary role was to help organize the Tlaxcalan town and to serve as the official representative of the crown. Francisco de Urdiñola was himself a wealthy landholder in the region who had a vested interest in the success of this colonization project. He was a Basque immigrant born in 1552, who had initially built his fortune in the mining regions of Nieves in northeastern New Spain. With this money he began to buy tracts of land and obtained a land grant for the *estancia* of San Francisco de los Patos in 1583. This was to become the initial

⁶⁷ Martínez-Baracs, 'Colonizaciones Tlaxcaltecas,' 221.

holding that would eventually comprise the Marquesado de Aguayo, which came to dominate the region of Coahuila and Nueva Vizcaya in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1603 Urdiñola was consequently appointed governor of Nueva Vizcaya. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century his estates were primarily devoted to cattle ranching, but the haciendas of Patos and Parras also grew grain, which supplied the mining regions of Zacatecas, Mazapil and Sombrerete.⁶⁸ Urdiñola therefore served as a pivotal actor in the pacification of the northeastern provinces.

Captain de Urdiñola helped survey the surrounding region of Saltillo and let the Tlaxcalans choose the site for their settlement. The pueblo of San Esteban de Nueva Tlaxcala was officially founded on September 13, 1591.⁶⁹ It appears that most of the original settlers of San Esteban came from the area of Tizátlan in Tlaxcala. The town was therefore named after San Esteban Tizátlan.⁷⁰ Four of the neighborhoods in San Esteban were also named after original settlements from Tlaxcala. The neighborhood of La Concepción was named after Santa María Concepción Atlihuetzian, San Buenaventura was named after San Buenaventura Atempan, and the fifth neighborhood was named La Purificación.⁷¹ Once the initial decision concerning the location of public buildings was made, each family

⁶⁸ Altman, "The Marques de Aguayo," 4.

⁶⁹ Vito Alessio Robles, *Francisco de Urdiñola y el Norte de la Nueva España* (México: Imprenta Mundial, 1931): 184.

⁷⁰ Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 186.

⁷¹ Martínez-Baracs, "Colonizaciones Tlaxcaltecas," 225.

chose a parcel of land where they could build their homes and farms. The community also chose the location of their town square and the sites for the church and Franciscan monastery. As the official representative of the crown, Captain Urdiñola approved all of these decisions.

There were eventually eighty-seven families that settled in San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala. Although the townships of San Esteban and Saltillo were only divided by one street, they would have a drastically different political existence. Saltillo was under the political and administrative government of Nueva Vizcaya, with its capital in Durango. Judicially it was under Nueva Galicia, with its capital in Guadalajara. San Esteban was under the direct jurisdiction of the viceroy of New Spain and under the judicial jurisdiction of Mexico's *Real Audiencia*, as had been the case for its parent colony.⁷²

Just as they had been in their original communities, the Tlaxcalan inhabitants of Coahuila and most of Nueva Vizcaya were under the religious authority of the Franciscans. The Franciscans had a long history in the north. One of the first Franciscan monasteries in the northeast was established in Saltillo in 1582, although it was soon abandoned because of indigenous attacks on the settlement. Missions were established in the province of Coahuila starting in 1673 under the guidance of the Colegio de Santiago de Jalisco. They remained in the area until 1781, when the missions were turned over to the Colegio de

⁷² Alessio Robles, *Coahuila y Texas*, 188.

Pachuca.⁷³ With the arrival of the Tlaxcalans the Franciscans were able to develop a more permanent presence in the area. By late eighteenth century there were seven Franciscan missions in the Province of Coahuila (Saltillo/San Esteban and Parras, which had formed part of Nueva Vizcaya, were incorporated into Coahuila in 1786). They included San Miguel Aguayo, Santa Rosa de Nadadores, San Bernadino, San Francisco Vizarrón, Dulce Nombre de Jesús, and San Juan Bautista.⁷⁴ There was also a Jesuit mission in the nearby town of Parras. It was established in 1598 and served as the main religious center for the Tlaxcalans that helped settle Parras until the Jesuits were expelled in 1767. Many Tlaxcalans lived and helped maintain these missions, presumably to help incorporate nomadic groups, but they also provided much needed labor for the religious orders. Most of the missions of the northeast began the process of secularization (bringing the missions under diocesan control) by the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1802 there were only four remaining Franciscan missions ministered by the Colegio de Pachuca; Peyotes, Vizarrón, San Bernardo, and San Juan Bautista.⁷⁵ Consequently, after the religious orders left the region the Tlaxcalans relied on parish priests.

⁷³ Lino Gómez Canedo, *Evangelización, cultura y promoción social: Ensayos y estudios críticos sobre las contribuciones Franciscanas a los orígenes cristianos de México (siglos XVI-XVIII)* (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1993): 490.

⁷⁴ Cecilia Sheridan, *Anónimos y desterrados: La contienda por el 'sitio que llaman de Quauyla (siglos xvi-xviii)* (México: CIESAS, 2000): 332.

⁷⁵ Peter Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982): 331.

Tlaxcalan Privileges

Whether or not Tlaxcalans were able to attain great advantages by migrating north is debatable. Tlaxcalans were expected to sacrifice their peaceful stability and land in order to take part in this dangerous colonization project. In exchange, they were given the following concessions:

1. The Tlaxcalans in the Chichimeca country and all their descendants would be *hidalgos* in perpetuity, free from tributes, taxes, and personal service, for all time.
2. They were not to be compelled to settle with Spaniards, but would be allowed to live apart from them and have their own distinct *barrios*. No Spaniard would be allowed to take or buy any residential property within the Tlaxcalan districts.
3. The Tlaxcalans were to be, at all times, settled apart from the Chichimecas; and this distinction was to apply to all of their lots, pastures, wooded lands, rivers, saltbeds, mills, and fishing rights.
4. No grants of land for the larger livestock [horses, mules, oxen] would be allowed within three leagues (9 miles) of the Tlaxcalan settlements; the limit for such grants for the smaller livestock [sheep, swine] was two leagues (6 miles).
5. None of the smaller livestock would be allowed pasturage on the grain lands of the Tlaxcalans without their permission or that of their descendants.
6. All lands granted individually or in community to the Tlaxcalans were not to be alienated because of non-occupation, during a period of five years, renewable if necessary
7. The markets in the new settlements would be free, exempt from all forms of taxation, for a period of thirty years.
8. The Tlaxcalan colonists and their descendants, besides being *hidalgos* and free from all tribute, would henceforth enjoy all exemptions and privileges already granted, or to be granted in the future, to the province and city of Tlaxcala.
9. The chief men (*principales*) of Tlaxcala who go to the new settlements, and their descendants, would be permitted to carry arms and ride saddled horses without penalty. For the northward journey itself, the Tlaxcalans would be given the necessary provisions and clothing, and this shall continue for two years. In addition, they shall

receive aid in the cultivation of their fields for the same amount of time.

10. The Tlaxcalans would be given a charter of written guarantees and a royal provision commanding that these capitulations be observed.⁷⁶

Yet, some argue that the end of the sixteenth century was actually the most difficult for the Tlaxcalans. Not only did they give up four-hundred and one families, but the Spanish also forced them to pay tribute and imposed the *servicio de tostón*.⁷⁷ Tlaxcalans, aided by the Franciscan friars, were able to renegotiate several points. The viceroy conceded to giving the Franciscans jurisdiction in these territories instead of the Jesuits. He also allowed them to have twenty-five Tlaxcalans for the construction of their own cathedral in Los Ángeles, Puebla.⁷⁸ Even so, Charles Gibson argues that most of the privileges given on paper rarely materialized in practice.⁷⁹

One of the privileges given to the Tlaxcalans was that they would be *hidalgos*. What did it mean to be an indigenous noble? During the eighteenth century there were a series of requests made by the residents of San Esteban to central authorities of New Spain requesting confirmation of their noble status. This insistence on maintaining or reviving their *hidalgo* rights appeared to be an act of resistance and also part of the ongoing development of Tlaxcalan ethnic

⁷⁶ Philip Wayne Powell, *Mexico's Miguel Caldera* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977): 149.

⁷⁷ Martínez Baracs, "Colonizaciones Tlaxcalatecas," 219.

⁷⁸ "Memoria de las cosas que piden los indios de la provincia de Tlaxcala que han de ir a las nuevas poblaciones Chichimecas," In Carlos Sempat Assodourian and Andrea Martínez Baracs, coords. *Tlaxcala: Textos de su historia, siglo XVI*. Vol. 6 (Tlaxcala: Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala, 1991): 532-536.

identity. Economically and socially Tlaxcalans did not seem to be doing much better than *castas* or other indigenous groups. Noble status did not give them any real privileges. Even so, Tlaxcalans spent much time and effort protecting this status. Hence, much of the documentation available on the township of San Esteban relates to their constant struggles to maintain these royal promises. This was a central facet of eighteenth century Tlaxcalan society and will consequently be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters.

The Northern Provinces in the Eighteenth Century

With the ascension of the Bourbon monarchs in 1700, Spain decided that the northern provinces needed to be more efficiently managed so they would be more profitable. The Marqués de Rubí was sent by Charles III to inspect this northern territory in 1766. After a 2-year tour Rubí came to the conclusion that Spain had left itself open to northern attacks and therefore needed to fortify the region in order to protect Louisiana, which it had recently acquired from the French.⁸⁰ Indigenous retaliation against Spanish encroachment of their land had increased throughout the eighteenth century, a time when Spanish defense expenditures had also doubled.⁸¹ The wars with the Apaches proved costly for Spain and consequently they were unable to support permanent civilian settlements in the north.

⁷⁹ Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 26.

⁸⁰ Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 205.

In addition, nomadic indigenous tribes for the most part did not want to be confined to missions. By the late seventeenth century many of these were destroyed in Florida and New Mexico, as well as in areas of northeastern New Spain. Indeed, although the Apaches had requested a mission and presidio in the mid-eighteenth century that was built along the San Saba River in Texas, the Comanches, along with Tonhawa and Hasinai Indians, burned the mission down in 1758.⁸² They killed eight people including fray Alonso Grivaldo de Terreros, who was in charge.⁸³ Because of this and other violent episodes colonial authorities began to fortify the northern territory. By the mid-eighteenth century Spain focused less on supporting missions and instead built presidios as a form of colonial defense. By the 1760s *presidios* had become the dominant form of frontier institution.⁸⁴

This renewed effort to militarize the frontier reflected a growing interest in protecting the northern territory by the new Bourbon monarchs. In 1772 royal authorities developed a set of new policies for the north that in many ways were very similar to the changes recommended in 1729 by the previous inspector, Pedro Rivera.⁸⁵ That plan called for the construction of fifteen permanent outposts, each in one hundred-mile intervals spanning an area from Sonora to the

⁸¹ Ibid, 205.

⁸² In 1756-57 some Tlaxcalans were sent to San Saba to help pacify the Apaches. Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 188.

⁸³ Ibid, 189-190.

⁸⁴ Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 214.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 214-215.

Texas gulf coast. Under Rivera's plan many of the existing garrisons would either be moved or be shifted down to follow the new line of defense. In all there would be seventeen *presidios*. The Marqués de Rubí apparently saw the same problems in the 1760s that Rivera had reported about in 1729 and consequently had similar advice for Spanish officials. He believed that the Spanish should follow a "continuous offensive war" in order to exterminate the Apaches. He also recommended that the Spanish should develop alliances with Comanches and other Apache enemies.⁸⁶ One of the first changes enacted under the Regulations of 1772 was the appointment of a *comandante inspector* (chief inspector) who would have the power to plan and implement these offensive strategies. The first appointee was lieutenant colonel Hugo O'Connor, who tried to implement Rubí's line of presidios, but not surprisingly the outcome of this new strategy was that indigenous raids actually increased in some areas.⁸⁷

In 1776, Charles III created the *Comandancia General de las Provincias Internas*, which placed the northern territories under the crown's direct control. Teodoro de Croix consequently became the new head of the *Comandancia*. De Croix had jurisdiction over a vast area that included Texas, Coahuila, New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, Sonora, Sinaloa, and Alta and Baja California.⁸⁸ Like Rubí, de Croix believed that the only solution to the "Indian problem" was to

⁸⁶ Ibid, 220.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 224.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 224-225.

follow an offensive war against unfriendly tribes. He toured the region extensively and realigned some presidios he felt were not strategically located. De Croix also increased the number of soldiers in the provinces from 1,900 to 2,840 and began to develop alliances with the Comanches, the Apaches' historical enemy. De Croix also recruited other native allies from the northern nations. This plan might have been successful, but it was interrupted by renewed conflicts in Europe. The regiments that were to be sent to the provinces were needed for Spain's war with England. Instead of following an offensive strategy, as de Croix had hoped, Spain was forced to follow a defensive strategy in the north once again.⁸⁹

Tlaxcalans thus provided military aid to the Spanish who had to fight off attacks by nomadic tribes. In 1663, the Tlaxcalans assisted with an expedition led by the governor of Nuevo León, Martín de Zavala, against the Coahuiltecas.⁹⁰ Between 1664 and 1670 the residents of San Esteban claimed to have participated in twenty-eight expeditions against the Chichimecas.⁹¹ After the reorganization of the northern provinces and the creation of military units under Teodoro de Croix between 1777-1782, residents of San Esteban contributed 55 men to the militia headquartered in Saltillo.⁹² Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth

⁸⁹ Ibid, 226.

⁹⁰ David B. Adams, "The Tlaxalan Colonies of Spanish Coahuila and Nuevo León: An Aspect of the Settlement of Northern Mexico." Ph.D. Dissertation. The University of Texas at Austin, 1970: 219-220.

⁹¹ Adams, "The Tlaxalan Colonies," 219.

⁹² Ibid, 224-225.

centuries Tlaxcalan residents of San Esteban and Parras contributed men for the defense of the northern provinces in areas such as Texas and the mining regions of Zacatecas and the Bolson de Mapimí.⁹³ In 1759, under Diego Ortiz de Padilla, the commander of the *presidio* of San Saba, Tlaxcalans contributed ten men from each of their three colonies in Coahuila to help mount an expedition against the nomadic groups in Texas.⁹⁴

Spanish efforts to subdue the northern peoples formed part of a seemingly never-ending project that depleted much of their resources. Spain's war with England also made it impossible for the crown to provide the resources necessary so the provinces could subdue the Apaches. José de Gálvez consequently urged Teodoro de Croix to achieve peace through gifts and trade.⁹⁵ This policy would thus ensure Apache dependency on the Spanish and in time they would adopt a European way of life. Bernardo de Gálvez, José de Gálvez's nephew, officially implemented this trade policy when he became the viceroy of New Spain in 1785.⁹⁶ In the Instructions of 1786 three new policies were emphasized; the continuation of military pressure on the Apaches, the continued development of alliances with Indian tribes and the creation of a dependent relationship between peace-seeking Indians through gifts and trade.⁹⁷ Some Apaches accepted

⁹³ Ibid, 223.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 227.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 227.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 228.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 229.

settlement in reservation-like towns by the 1790s.⁹⁸ By 1793, 2,000 Apaches had settled in eight of these areas. Spanish officials thus hoped that indigenous peoples would congregate in townships, devote themselves to farming, and adopt Christianity. Yet, many Apaches and Comanches were unable to adopt this way of life and oftentimes moved away from these settlements. Consequently, fighting between the Spanish and the indigenous people of the north continued until the nineteenth century.⁹⁹

Continuing hostilities deeply influenced the development indigenous settlements in the north of New Spain. Spain's renewed interest in these provinces and their growing concern with accumulating and protecting their wealth refocused their interest in subduing northern nomadic tribes. This new military activity allowed for Spanish settlements to grow dramatically during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tlaxcalans helped fight in these indigenous wars and protected Spanish settlements. Consequently, their communities were forever changed by frontier wars, economic expansion and demographic growth.

The Settlement of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala

Despite of ongoing hostilities in the north, the settlement of San Esteban seemed to prosper throughout the seventeenth century and was able to provide

⁹⁸ Ibid, 253.

⁹⁹ On the continuation of hostilities and eventual extermination of nomadic groups in northeastern Mexico during the nineteenth century see, Martha Rodríguez. *Historias de resistencia y exterminio. Los indios de Coahuila durante el siglo xix* (CIESAS-INI: México, 1995).

settlers for other townships in Nueva Vizcaya and Coahuila. Tlaxcalan settlers helped found Parras, San Miguel de Aguayo, San Francisco, and La Candela. The original San Esteban colonists also settled other towns in northern areas of present-day Coahuila, as well as in Nuevo León. In Coahuila they included: San Andrés de Nava (along the Rio Grande/Bravo river), Santo Nombre de Dios (near the Sabinas river), San Miguel de Aguayo, Nuestra Señora de la Victoria de Casafuerte, San Francisco de Nueva Tlaxcala (near Monclova), and San Bernardo Candela.¹⁰⁰ During the seventeenth century the Governor of Nuevo León, Don Agustín de Echeverz Espinal y Subiza, the first Marqués de Aguayo, encouraged the development of two Tlaxcalans settlements in the north. The Tlaxcalans, who petitioned the Crown for permission to establish these townships, settled near Boca de Leones (the site of a mining camp) and Echeverez also helped them to establish a settlement in San Miguel de la Nueva Tlaxcala (San Miguel de Aguayo), as well as San Juan de Carrizal (located northwest of the town of Monterrey) in 1683.¹⁰¹ They also assisted the Canary Islanders as they made their way to their permanent settlement in San Antonio de Bexar.¹⁰² These settlements helped the Spanish establish rule in the north, but Tlaxcalans were also able to relieve some of the social and economic pressures that might have developed in the original settlement of San Esteban if they were restricted to this enclave.

¹⁰⁰ Eugene B. Segó. *Aliados y adversarios: Los colonos tlaxcaltecas en la frontera septentrional de Nueva España*. San Luis Potosí: El Colegio de San Luis, 1998: 292.

¹⁰¹ Ida Altman, "The Marqueses de Aguayo: A Family and Estate History," B.A. Thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 1970: 18-19.

Conclusion

The alliance or pact established between the Tlaxalans and the Spanish state was not unique. The Tarascans in Nueva Vizcaya and the Opatas and Pimes of Sonora also developed these types of ties with colonial authorities.¹⁰³ Cynthia Radding refers to this association as the "colonial pact" between indigenous people and the colonial state. Although this pact gave certain groups that were willing to cooperate with colonial authorities more rights, it was continuously negotiated. Hence, this "contract" may not have allowed Tlaxcalans to live the life of *hidalgos*, but it did affect them, as much of their history involves a struggle to maintain or reinstate these rights.

¹⁰² Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, Presidencia Municipal, c1, e32, d9, 2f; AMS, PM, c1, e32, d17.

¹⁰³ See Susan Deeds, *Defiance and Deference in Mexico's Colonial North: Indians under Spanish Rule in Nueva Vizcaya* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003) and Cynthia Radding, *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700-1850* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

CHAPTER 2

Political Life

Indigenous peoples retained a certain level of autonomy by maintaining their own town councils and by having jurisdiction over most civil and criminal matters within their own communities, yet they clearly did not avoid the influence of the colonial government. By the eighteenth century the residents of San Esteban had learned to live under Spanish colonial authority, but this did not mean that they did not question and challenge laws and acts that were detrimental to their community. This chapter suggests that colonialism was not a system that was imposed during those first decades after the arrival of the Spanish in the New World and was completed by a certain date. Instead, this was a society that was maintained by constant negotiation between Spanish elites, colonial authorities, and subordinate groups. Royal authorities understood that they needed to incorporate all sectors of society in order to limit dissent.¹⁰⁴ Consequently, state ritual played an important role in preserving the colonial system. By studying the

¹⁰⁴ Susan Kellogg writes, "In the final analysis, Spanish rule did not rest solely on Spanish arms. Nor could European microorganisms reduce Indians to subjugation. So, too, internal divisions among the Indian population offer an insufficient explanation for the stability of Spanish rule in the central regions of New Spain. Instead, the explanation lies in something more subtle: a cross-cultural process of accommodation and negotiation that forged cultural hegemony." *Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture, 1500-1700* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995); xxxiii.

"rituals of everyday political life" we will be able to have a greater understanding of indigenous peoples' lives and the colonial world in general.¹⁰⁵

Spanish and Indian Towns

Although Spanish authorities initially thought it was in their best interest to encourage native people to live amongst Spaniards in order to best assure that they would learn to adopt European ways, they soon changed their minds and became convinced that this close contact in fact had a negative effect on indigenous communities. The Franciscans were especially indignant by the manner in which *encomenderos* abused Spanish laborers and consequently in 1530, the government decided to supplant the *encomienda* system with the *corregimiento* system for the administration of its colonies in New Spain.¹⁰⁶ Franciscan missionaries like, Jerónimo de Mendieta, hoped that Indians could be Christianized but not concurrently Hispanicized, as they believed that Spaniards did not provide a good moral example.¹⁰⁷ The beginning of this new more humanitarian royal policy was further supported by a Papal decree in 1537 that declared that Indians were in fact rational beings. Soon after, in 1549, the crown issued a decree, which ordered that Indians be placed in their own townships.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Mario Góngora, *Studies in the Colonial History of Spanish America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975): 79

¹⁰⁶ Mörner, Magnus. *Estado, razas y cambio social en Hispanoamérica colonial* (México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1974): 12-13.

¹⁰⁷ Mörner, *Estado, razas y cambio social*, 16.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 29.

By forcibly placing Indians in their own towns, Spaniards believed that they could better govern them as they were organized in accordance to the more familiar Spanish town and village structure. Yet, because there were both Indian and Spanish towns they could still maintain a social distance between themselves and the indigenous population. Spanish and Indians towns each had their own town councils, land tenure system and church.¹⁰⁹ The lands were allotted collectively to each Indian village, but each family was given an individual parcel in which to farm and live. The town council was in charge of paying tribute to the crown and of determining rules regarding local commerce, public buildings, such as jails, water distribution and roadways.¹¹⁰ On the religious front, these townships were supposed to have a regular priest, but more often than not it was the religious orders that were in charge of the villages' religious life. It was these clerics who eventually took it upon themselves to teach the Indians how to govern.¹¹¹

The northern colonies followed previous settlement statutes agreed upon with the Spanish crown. The 1560 settlement agreement for Xilotepec (in the modern-day state of Mexico) stated that the Tlaxcalan town would have a regular indigenous government that included a *gobernador*, *alcaldes*, *regidores*, and *alguaciles*. In that case, the crown also agreed that the settlers should be given

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 23-24.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 21.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 22-23.

oxen and plowing equipment and that Spaniards would not be allowed to settle in Tlaxcalan lands. Tlaxcalans were also exempt from paying tribute for at least sixteen years.¹¹² The Tlaxcalan settlements in the north designed their town governments as they were organized in Tlaxcala. They had their own *gobernador, alcalde, regidor alguacil, and escribano*. They also chose their own leaders in annual elections.¹¹³ The viceroy approved San Esteban's town council elections until 1786. The general commander of the region approved them after the creation of the Internal Provinces.¹¹⁴ The governor of Nueva Vizcaya assigned them an Indian protector (*capitán protector de Indios*). Later the governor of Coahuila made these appointments when the area of Parras and Saltillo became part of that region. It was his responsibility to protect the Tlaxcalans' rights in local inter-community matters with neighboring Spanish townships. The protector would often be a cause of strife for the Tlaxcalan communities who at times complained about their negligent or incendiary behavior. Finally, Tlaxcalan land would be clearly identified as belonging to them and neither Spaniards nor other Indian groups would be allowed to reside within three *leguas* of the Tlaxcalan *pueblos*.

¹¹² Charles Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952): 183.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 187.

¹¹⁴ Peter Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982): 221.

The San Esteban *Cabildo*

The town of San Esteban transferred its political organization from central Tlaxcala and consequently it maintained its own government throughout the colonial period.¹¹⁵ Like its parent colony in Tlaxcala, the residents of San Esteban fought to remain under the Crown's rule, apparently because they believed that if this was the case they might have greater freedom in deciding their own affairs.

Throughout much its history the residents of San Esteban maintained an active town council. Unlike other municipalities (even non-indigenous villas) San Esteban generally kept their posts filled.¹¹⁶ They elected a *gobernador*, or an *indio principal*. *Gobernadores* were directly responsible for protecting the town's interests and were involved in spearheading litigation for the town.¹¹⁷ Two *alcalde ordinarios* were also chosen. Their official role was to administer justice, but in practical terms they also were pivotal in leading the litigation process to protect the town's rights, as well as other practical matters like administering the town's landholdings.¹¹⁸ The *regidores* were under the direction of the *alcaldes*.

¹¹⁵ Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 187.

¹¹⁶ Cheryl English Martin notes that although the residents of San Felipe el Real de Chihuahua took their civic duties very seriously, they had difficulty in maintaining their council positions filled. *Governance and Society in Colonial Mexico: Chihuahua in the Eighteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996): 88-89.

¹¹⁷ Robert Haskett. *Indigenous Rulers: An Ethnohistory of Town Government in Colonial Cuernavaca*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992): 99-100.

¹¹⁸ Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers*, 105.

The *regidores* were in fact in charge of governing the city or town.¹¹⁹ Between two and four *regidores* were chosen, as well as an *alguacil mayor* (a town constable), a *teniente de alguacil mayor*, and a *procurador mayor*. The parish priest, scribe, and protector were also important parts of the San Esteban ruling structure.

Each of the elected members of the council could only serve for one yearly term and each election had to be validated by royal officials.¹²⁰ Although this seemingly allowed for much higher turnover in the council membership, many of those serving in one capacity one year would oftentimes continue to serve in the council in another council seat the following year. For example, in 1770 Francisco Rugello was the *gobernador* of the San Esteban council and then served as a *regidor* in 1771. This was also the case for Luis Xavier, who served as the *alcalde ordinario* in 1770 and then as a *regidor* in 1771. A more common practice was for a council member to skip one or several years between his tenure in the council. Juan de los Santos was a *regidor* in 1772 and then once again in 1775 and 1780. Yldefonso Matheo was a *regidor* in 1773, 1776, then a *procurador mayor* in 1800, and once again served as a *regidor* in 1805. Francisco Salvador served in the council on four occasions. He was *gobernador* in 1774, 1778 and 1784, and was a *regidor* in 1776.

¹¹⁹ Góngora. *Studies in the Colonial History of Spanish America*, 100.

¹²⁰AMS, PM, c1, e 47 and AMS, PM, c39/1, e49. Ildefonso Dávila del Bosque. *Los cabildos tlaxcaltecas* (Saltillo: Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, 2000): 73.

The San Esteban council was composed of highly experienced men who appeared to have learned much about town government through years of service in council posts. An analysis of the governors between 1770 and 1810 and testament records reveal that many served in this position during the later years of their lives. Salvador Ramos, for example, was governor in 1772 and an inventory of his possessions (taken after his death) was taken in 1777, as he did not draw up a testament before he died.¹²¹ Lorenzo Mathías Ramos, governor in 1774, left his last will and testament in 1781.¹²² Gobernador Juan Magno Delgado served his term in 1798 and an inventory of his possessions was taken in 1802.¹²³ In 1776 the serving *gobernador*, Blas Dionicio, died while serving his term and his successor, Salvador Ramos, passed away a month after completing his term in February 7, 1777.¹²⁴ Several other *gobernadores* went on to live for years after leaving office, like Joseph Joaquin Ramos, who served in 1773 and did not draw up his testament until 1816 and Pedro Santiago Garcia who served in 1775 and did not have an inventory of his possessions taken until 1798.¹²⁵ Yet, it does appear that the person who served as the *gobernador* was a town elder. A more extensive study tracking the life-span and activities of Tlaxcalan governors using birth and death records would shed light on council membership and activities,

¹²¹ January 17, 1777. Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, Testamentos, c17, e4, 2f.

¹²² December 12, 1781. AMS, T, c18, e16, 17f.

¹²³ October 14, 1802. AMS, T, c22, e139, 6f.

¹²⁴ Dávila del Bosque, *Los cabildos Tlaxcaltecas*, 71.

¹²⁵ November 13, 1816. AMS, T, c25, e54, 2f; October 7, 1798. AMS, T, c22, e53, 2f.

yet this initial evidence does indicate that the input of elders was highly valued. Indeed, in an accord from 1784 that resolved a boundary dispute the *escribano* writes that the "town council, justice, and administration, in a meeting celebrated with the rest of the elders of this town, resolved that a street that begins at the corner of the house belonging to the heirs of the deceased Salvador Ramos should continue until the main street."¹²⁶ Matters of importance to the town required the input of the most experienced members of the community.

Age and experience were not the only qualities that were valued by the residents of San Esteban. Several of those who served as *gobernadores* had previously been the town council's scribes. Scribes obviously had to know how to read and write in Spanish, as they recorded important transactions. It was important for the community to have leaders who were able to communicate in Spanish, as much of their time serving in the council was spent pursuing and following up legal cases, as well as preparing petitions and correspondence designed to influence royal authorities. Ascencio Victoriano Ramos, who served as San Esteban's governor in 1805, was also listed as the *escribano* from 1762 until 1790.¹²⁷ Carlos Marcelo Sánchez also was a scribe before becoming

¹²⁶ "...el cabildo, justicia y regimiento, en junta celebrada con los demas ancianos de este pueblo, resolvió que un callejón que principia en la esquinade la casa de los herederos del difunto Salvador Ramos, saliera hasta la calle Real." May 24, 1784. AMS, T, c19, e10, 1f.

¹²⁷ Ascencio Victoriano Ramos is listed as the *escribano* who prepared testaments more than twenty times. A few cases include: April 3, 1762. AMS, T, c13, e14, 2f; April 7, 1762. AMS, T, c13, e15, 2f; March 21, 1772. AMS, T, c15, e40, 2f; April 18, 1772. AMS, T, c15, e42, 2f; March 25, 1782. AMS, T, c18, e19, 2f; February 18, 1785. AMS, T, c18, e29, 2f; October 7, 1785. AMS, T, c19, e44, 14f; February 27, 1790. AMS, T, c20, e37, 2f.

gobernador in 1808.¹²⁸ There are also several instances where Mathías Valentín Ramos was listed as the *escribano* during the 1780s.¹²⁹ He served his term as *gobernador* in 1806.¹³⁰

The San Esteban council not only fulfilled an important civic role, as it brought order to the community and represented its needs when dealing with individuals or groups, but it also met a symbolic role. One of the first acts performed by Francisco de Urdiñola in 1608 was to confirm the election of San Esteban officials.¹³¹ During the seventeenth century Tlaxcalan elections were authenticated with regularity by outside authorities.¹³² This was not simply a rubber stamp on local events by royal officials. The validation of San Esteban elections by the lieutenant captain of Nueva Vizcaya or Nueva Galicia gave the San Esteban council the "right to govern their towns and the power to rule."¹³³

Although outsiders were not to intervene or influence Tlaxcalan elections, as intervention in indigenous *pueblos* was outlawed in 1620, the residents of San Esteban still at times faced problems keeping interlopers out of their community's

¹²⁸ January 5, 1781. AMS, T, c18, e2, 7f.

¹²⁹ The exact spelling of the name for an *escribano* Mathías Valentín Ramos is used in two instances: July 6, 1782. AMS, T, c18, e20, 2f; July 4, 1784. AMS, T, c19, e13, 3f.

¹³⁰ It is unclear if the Mathías Valentín who served as *gobernador* was the same Matías Valentín Ramos or Matías Valentino Ramos, who were also listed as scribes.

¹³¹ 12/1/1608. *Catálogo de fondo de testamentos, Tomo I* (Saltillo: Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, 1998); 1.

¹³² Validation of local elections appeared in the testamentary catalogue for the years of 1609, 1613, 1616, 1618, 1623, 1626, 1643, 1646, 1655, 1662, 1670, 1679. *Catálogo de fondo de testamentos*.

¹³³ "Domingo de Lazaranzu, teniente de capitán del reino de la Nueva Galicia, confirme la elección del pueblo de San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, dándoles poder y facultades para que los desempeñen." *Catálogo de fondo de testamentos*, 8.

matters. In 1742, the *cabildo* turned to the *Audiencia de México* to complain that the election had been tainted because of outside interference. The *Audiencia* responded by ordering that the lieutenant (presumably of Saltillo) could not have any say in San Esteban's elections. The only one who could legally take part in the process was the parish priest. In addition, they stressed that under the law no outside governor or judge could have say over civil or criminal matters in an Indian *pueblo*. Outsiders did not have jurisdiction over ordinary criminal matters, but they could become involved in such affairs if they involved drunkenness, minor injuries, when it was a matter of correcting or inculcating positive behavior on the Indians, or when dealing with testaments.¹³⁴ As the *Audiencia de Mexico* pointed out in this 1742 case, the town priest was the one person who was legally allowed to be part of an indigenous community's election process. Although there is little evidence that directly outlines what roles priests played in San Esteban elections, evidently their presence and influence in other related religious and political matters was of notable importance. In his study of Indian villages in colonial Cuernavaca Robert Haskett found evidence that priests and friars had great influence over elections and oftentimes interfered in the election process.¹³⁵ Tlaxcalans also complained to religious authorities about improprieties in their parish, but also about the political situation. In one instance, taking place in 1679,

¹³⁴ AMS, PM, c10, e11. *Témas del Virreinato*, 46.

¹³⁵ Robert Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers: An Ethnohistory of Town Government in Colonial Cuernavaca* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991): 43.

bishop Don Juan Santiago de León wrote the northern enclaves ordering that indigenous peoples should not be mistreated.¹³⁶

Local unrest during San Esteban elections is not documented, but royal edicts were issued and publicized in Saltillo and San Esteban that tried to stamp out possible irregularities in indigenous election process. In a 1779 message sent to the northern provinces, Teodoro de Croix, the General Commander of the Provinces, stated that he was well aware that in the Indian towns many were serving longer than their one-year terms.¹³⁷ He ordered that the elections be carried out as had been stipulated in the *Leyes de Recopilación* and that each election result be sent to his government so that they could be officially confirmed. Indeed, after 1770 priests and royal officials monitored more elections and non-Indians were encouraged to oversee the electoral process in Indian towns. By 1773 priests took censuses in order to record the exact number of voters and candidates in pueblos, thus "ensuring that only qualified individuals participated in elections."¹³⁸ Robert Haskett surmises that by the latter half of the eighteenth century colonial officials who had previously believed that outsiders could only corrupt the electoral process had now concluded that "incapable indigenous voters needed very strict supervision to carry out a valid election."¹³⁹

¹³⁶ "The bishop of Nueva Galicia recommends that the Indians be treated better and condemns the excesses committed against them," Valdés, *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 115-122.

¹³⁷ AMS, PM, c31/1, e45. *Témas del Virreinato*, 57.

¹³⁸ Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers*, 54.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 55.

The Civic Duties of San Esteban's Town Council

If the voluminous number of legal cases and complaints to royal authorities are any indication of the town council's commitment to their constituents- then it is clear that they took their jobs very seriously. In one such example of a letter written by the *cabildo* they write to royal authorities asking that royal privileges given to the original four-hundred Tlaxcalan colonizers that came north be extended to the current population of San Esteban. They begin this 1781 petition by writing:

Don Sebastián Hernandes son of the *Cabezer*, son of Don Andrés de Caderes, and Don Domingo de Ramos, son of Don Andrés and the deceased *malsehualtain* indigenous to the Pueblo of San Esteban del Saltillo in the Chichimeca frontier. We write representing ourselves and representing the other inhabitants of said Pueblo where we are the actual Alcalde, Regidor and Escribano. For whom we lend our voice and prudence.¹⁴⁰

They go on to argue that their ancestors had given their services to the crown and had helped pacify the northern territories and should consequently receive the privileges allotted to the original settlers from Tlaxcala. They continued to support this argument by saying that,

...the four-hundred males under which their parents were to be included who went to those settlements...were well-known *Principales* (leaders) from the four *cabeceras* from that city and region (Tlaxcala) they owned lands and homes and did not

¹⁴⁰ "Don Sebastián Hernandes Hijo de Cabezer, hijo de Don Andrés de Caderes, y Don Domingo de Ramos, hijo de don Andrés y masehualtain difuntos, Naturales que somos del Pueblo de San Esteban del Saltillo Frontera de las Chichimecas. Por nos y en Nombre de los demás naturales de dicho Pueblo de donde somos Alcalde, Regidor y Escribano actuales. Por quien prestamos voz y caución en forma como mejor haya lugar de Derecho y al mo. convenga." AMS, PM, c33/1, e50. *Temas del Virreinato*, 84.

recognize of pay *tarrasgo* because they were *principales* and as the current *maseguales* had and continued to do in said province because of their previously mentioned *calidad* (social standing).¹⁴¹

The *cabildo* demanded that the original documents that spelled out their privileges be copied and transferred to San Esteban. What followed was a detailed retelling of the privileges given to the Tlaxcalans. Although it is unclear why it was that the *cabildo* of San Esteban demanded such documentation at this time, one can only surmise that it was because they needed to support their rights or property claims in local disputes. The Tlaxcalan *cabildo* oftentimes demanded that colonial authorities restate their primordial rights during the latter half of the eighteenth century. This particular document and others requested or presented by the residents of San Esteban will be discussed in further detail in a later chapter.

The 1629 document, which was presented as a copy of the original rights given to the Tlaxcalans who settled in the north, was transferred from Tlaxcala to San Esteban in 1782. The residents of San Esteban therefore assumed that local authorities and even royal authorities had to abide by what was spelled out in such documentation. The *cabildo* members certified that nothing in the said document had been changed or added and that all had been done legally.¹⁴² This document,

¹⁴¹ "...las cuatrocientas Personas Varones en cuyo número entran los dichos nuestros padres que fueron a la dicha Población eran y fueron Principales conocidos de las cuatro cabeceras de esta Ciudad y provincia y tales personas que tenían casas y tierras suyas propias que no reconocían ni pagaban *tarrasgo* por ser principales como lo hacían y hacen los *maseguales* en esta provincia Por ser de la *calidad* referida." AMS, PM, c33/1, e50. *Temas del Virreinato*, 84.

¹⁴² AMS, PM, c33/1, e50. *Temas del Virreinato*, 90.

along with many others, were then placed in the town's archive and were taken out and used as evidence to support the residents of San Esteban in later legal disputes.¹⁴³

These type of documents (or copies of original documents) and edicts were highly valued by the residents of San Esteban and other indigenous groups. These records became one of the primary ways in which they could defend themselves in the colonial world. James Lockhart writes,

...it seems as if the local people are using the Spanish paraphernalia as magic, as something efficacious rather than understood. They appear to have believed that if one only shouted out the right abracadabra of years, names, and titles, the genie would deliver eternally unchallenged possession of one's territory.¹⁴⁴

Spanish ritual surrounding such documents could only support indigenous peoples' belief that these papers held some kind of mystical role in Spanish society.

The Saltillo *Cabildo*

In many respects, the Saltillo town council represented the colonial state to northern settlers. Although they spent an extensive amount of time dealing directly with royal governors and writing the viceroy and even the king in Spain,

¹⁴³ These legal conflicts will be discussed in the following chapter. One such dispute included: AMS, PM, c1, e7. Valdés, 285-297.

¹⁴⁴ James Lockhart, "Views of Corporate Self and History in Some Valley of Mexico Towns: Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," In *The Inca and Aztec States, 1400-1800* (New York: Academic Press): 390.

it was the Saltillo council and the actions of its members (who were oftentimes also the town and region's wealthiest landowners) that most directly touched the lives of the residents of San Esteban. In her study of the Saltillo merchant class in the late colonial period, Leslie Offutt notes that by the early eighteenth century even Crown-appointed district magistrates were local residents.¹⁴⁵ Saltillo's town council was composed of a number of *alcaldes* and *regidores*, as well as a *procurador* and a scribe. The council was responsible for regulating the marketplace, administering the town's land and water, maintaining public buildings, providing for defense of the community, collecting taxes, and assessing fines for criminal and civil charges.

The Saltillo town council was composed of both elected members and propertied officeholders who bought their positions. Two *alcaldes ordinarios*, two *regidores*, and a *sindico procurador* were officials chosen in annual elections. The *alférez real*, *alcalde provincial*, the *regidor fiel ejecutor*, the *alguacil mayor* and the *regidor depositario* were posts that were auctioned to the highest bidder. Although the scribe was also a member of the town council he did not have a vote. Members of the council could run for reelection two years after serving their terms.¹⁴⁶ The elected officials were chosen from candidates selected by the

¹⁴⁵ Leslie Offutt. *Saltillo, 1770-1810: Town and Region in the Mexican North* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001): 138-139

¹⁴⁶ Offutt, *Saltillo, 1770-1810*, 140-141.

most senior *cabildo* official, who could nominate friends, allies, business partners, and relatives.¹⁴⁷

Saltillo also did not have difficulty maintaining council posts filled at the end of the colonial period. Unlike other northern towns, this period appeared to be a time of economic growth and increasing political importance for the Villa of Saltillo.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, Saltillo was one of the towns that received a treasury office at the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, membership in the council garnered one respect in the community, but also had the added benefit of possibly helping to enrich the officeholder. In fact, the *regidor* posts were auctioned and by the end of the eighteenth century the posts of *alguacil mayor* and *regidor depositario general* were proprietary- or sold to the highest bidder.¹⁵⁰ Consequently, more often than not, by the end of the eighteenth century there was much less turnover in council members.

Those elected to the Saltillo council served an important political and economic role in the region. By the late colonial period a majority of *cabildo* members were in fact merchants.¹⁵¹ Indeed, not only was the *cabildo* made up of

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 140.

¹⁴⁸ Cheryl English Martin notes that the greatest interest in *cabildo* membership was in Chihuahua's heyday, during the mining boom of the 1730s, and that although townspeople continued to value serving in public office later in the century, they did have more difficulty filling council posts at that time; 88-89

¹⁴⁹ Offutt, *Saltillo, 1770-1810*, 170.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 139.

¹⁵¹ Leslie Offutt notes that between 1772 and 1810 56 of the 102 members of the elected *cabildo* were merchants, 25 were agriculturalists and 21 had unknown occupations. In that same time

the most economically prominent members of the community, but by the 1760s there was also a notable peninsular presence amongst Saltillo's town council members. Of the one-hundred and fifteen elected and propertied officers, thirty-three were peninsular Spaniards, twenty-seven were Creoles, one was from Italy, and fifty-four of the members' birthplaces were undetermined.¹⁵² In addition, many of these *peninsulares* came from the region of Castille.

Although it is difficult to fully comprehend the attitudes and motivations that drove the Saltillo city council, we can develop a clearer picture of this *cabildo* by analyzing their origins, occupations and other information available about them in the census and in municipal records. *Cabildo* members were usually peninsular Spaniards, older, married, had children and servants. They were the leading members of society who upheld its values. In the period between 1770 and 1810 Juan Landín, for example, purchased the post of *regidor fiel ejecutor*, which he held from 1770-1793. He was originally from Galicia, Spain and was married twice. Landín's primary occupational interests were commerce, agriculture and ranching. Juan Antonio González Bracho was also from Spain, from the town of Ruiloba in Burgos. He served as the *teniente de alcalde mayor* from 1784-1789 and then again in 1792 and 1796. In 1801 he returned to the city council and was the *alcalde ordinario de primer voto*.

period 10 of the 13 of those who held propertied office were merchants, 2 were agriculturalists and one had an undetermined occupation. *Saltillo, 1770-1810*, 152.

¹⁵² Offutt, *Saltillo, 1770-1810*, 152-153.

González Bracho also married twice, the second time to María Gertrudis de Aguirre, who was the mother of three of his children. He also had a daughter from his first marriage.¹⁵³ In the 1777 census his age is listed as being 45, his wife was 33, and his children (beginning with the ages of his daughter from his first marriage) were 17, 5, 4, and 2. There were also two female servants in his household; a 21 year old young woman listed as a *coyota* and a 13 year old girl classified as a *loba*. Bracho's primary occupations dealt with commerce and agriculture.

Pedro José de la Peña served as the *alcalde ordinario de segundo* and *primer voto* in 1774, 1775 and 1782. He then served continuously in the town council in some capacity from 1784 to 1802. De la Peña purchased the office of *regidor alcualcil mayor* and served in this capacity until his death. He was a Spaniard who listed Saltillo as his town of origin. Pedro José de la Peña married María Josefa Valdés and had eight children with her. He was employed in agriculture and ranching. When the previously discussed Juan Antonio González Bracho, the *alcalde ordinario de primer voto* passed away in 1801, it was Pedro José de la Peña who served as the interim mayor.¹⁵⁴ Francisco de Aguirre, also a Spaniard from Saltillo, served as the *alcalde ordinario de segundo voto* in 1799 and the *alcalde ordinario de primer voto* in 1800. He married María Ygnes

¹⁵³ Ildefonso Davila del Bosque, coord. *Alcaldes de Saltillo: La autoridad local, desde Alberto del Canto a los actuales municipios, 1577-1999* (Saltillo: Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, 1999): 81.

¹⁵⁴ Dávila del Bosque, *Alcaldes de Saltillo*, 91.

Morales, who was also Spanish. Francisco de Aguirre was 46 years old and María Ygnes was 25. There were six offspring in the household, ranging in ages from 20 to one year. One must therefore assume that María Ygnes was Francisco de Aguirre's second wife. There was also a 20-year old free mulatta in the home, named Josepha, who was the wet nurse (for Francisco and María Ygnes's baby). Josepha's one-year old son also lived in the household. Ignacia, another servant living in the home, was a 25-year old unmarried Indian woman who had her twelve-year old and four-year old sons living with her. Francisco de Aguirre's primary occupations were also listed as being commerce and agriculture.

Although it is unclear why these men were chosen (or chose) to become involved in the political life of the town, it is clear that they were considered to be the town's most prominent citizens. They had common occupations and although they were divided by the fact that some were Peninsular Spaniards and some were Creoles, none (as far as the current research indicates) of the *cabildo* members were from mixed caste groups, Indians, or black. Whether they were in fact the most prominent citizens because of the fact that they were Spanish, or were able to claim a higher status because of their wealth (or both) is unclear. What is evident is that there was a social hierarchy in the region and they- as Creole and peninsular men- sat atop this power structure. The dynamics of this arrangement was not something that was hidden. An important part of the symbolic role they served in the town council was to uphold and reenergize this social hierarchy.

The Ritual of Government

The symbolic presence of the king was visible even in these peripheral northern enclaves. Not only did elections in San Esteban need to be sanctioned by higher authorities in order to be valid, thus connecting this town to the broader colonial system, but the presence of the king was also evident in many other ways. For example, when an edict from the viceroy or another high colonial authority arrived and was read it was then kissed (much like a religious item) and lifted above the local government officials head, to show due reverence. Juan Martínez Guajardo, the *Teniente General de Alcalde Mayor* and General Captain of Saltillo writes in 1720:

...today, the 12th of August at around noon I was given a letter by Joseph de Quiintanilla Falcon, who brought it in the name of the Excelentísimo Señor Marqués de Balero Viceroy, Governor, and General Captain of this New Spain and was intended for the Alcalde Mayor of this said Villa. And since the Theniente General is absent...I opened it and in it I found a dispatch sent to the said Alcalde Mayor with the date of the 16th of July of this present year. It contained a letter from said Excelentísimo Señor, dated the 27th of July of this year. And having seen the orders from said office I stood up and raised above me as it was a command from His Majesty, may God save him, and in order to carry out its message and orders, I ordered for the *Capitán Protector* of the Tlaxcalan Indians from San Esteban del Saltillo, Don Sanchez de Robles, is to appear before me and he is to be informed of the Royal Edict sent by His Majesty, may God save him...¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ "...oy doze de agosto como a las dose del día se me entrego una carta por Joseph de Quintanilla Falcon quien me entrego y truxo devaxo Governador y cappitan General de esta Nueva España para el alcalde mayor de esta villay y como su theniente general por su ausencia para dal las providencias, que contubiese dicho pliego lo abri y en el alle un despacho que se comete dicho alcalde mayor su fecha de dies y seis de julio de este presente año con carta adjunta de dicho exelentísimo señor su fecha de veynte y siete de julio de dicho año y aviendo en el pie y magestad que Dios Guarde y cumplimiento de lo que se contiene y manda para su execusion y

These types of civic rituals remind ruling groups of their place in society, as well as vividly expressing relations of rank and power for other groups to emulate. Rituals needed to be reenergized so that society as a whole was constantly reminded of the importance of colonial leaders. The following document was located in the *Libro de Gobierno* of the Cathedral Church of Saltillo and it describes a visit by the General Commander of the Internal Provinces to the church of Chihuahua. It starts by noting that the celebration is conducted in a similar fashion in the church of Durango. Evidently, Saltillo was supposed to imitate this ritual act. It begins:

...in the first entrance to the town the Illustrious Gentleman was received by the venerable gentlemen of the town council in the following manner:

There was a buffer placed in the main side of the Church where a small cross was placed over a cushion and inside the Church were the priests of the Villa who were standing behind the cross and *ciriales* (wax candles). The parish priest and curate wear a cape and his subdeacon wears ornamental *Dalmaticas*, white in color and of the highest quality.

Later the Commander enters from the street where the Church is located, the church bells are rung, the priest kneels and presents the cross, which the Commander kisses, then the priest puts holy water on the Commander's forehead with the *hisopo* (sprinkler). After this is done, the priest sprinkles the onlookers as usual and while the Commander is still on his feet, the priest begins to sing the *Fe*

devido cumplimiento mando paresca ante mi el cappitan Don Francisco Sanchez de Robles capitan Don Francisco Sanchez de Robles capittan protector de los yndios tlaxcaltecos del pueblo de San Estevan del Saltillo con junto a esta villa y se le aga notorio la Real Sedula de su magestas que Dios guarda y lo determinado por el Exelentissimo señor Marques de Valero y su respuesta y exelentissimo Virrey como se manda y para que conste su devido obedesimiento lo puse por dilixencia y lo firme con dos testigos de asistencia a falta escrivano publico..." In Valdés, 145. Cheryl English Martin notes a similar show of reverence displayed by the town council of San Felipe el Real, Chihuahua toward royal decrees; 74.

Deuni gaudamos and the *cantores* accompany him with music. The procession made its way to the main altar, the aforementioned General Commander stands to the right of the priest until they finish playing the *Fe Deum*...once this is finished they go outside as far as the door and say their farewells, without carrying a cross, *ciriales* or any other ceremonial courtesy.

In the other days the following was observed:

At the door two chaplains wait for him [the Commander] wearing the surplice (loose fitting ecclesiastical gown worn over a cassock); on these days they administer holy water; the church bells are chimed when he [Commander] enters and leaves the Church.

In the prayed Mass:

The same chaplains accompany him [the Commander] until his seat, where they take his confession. Once they finish they leave and nod their head signaling that he is forgiven.

After they read from the Gospel, one of the chaplains takes a missal (a book of prayers and responses necessary for celebrating the Mass) -not the one used to say Mass- so that he [the Commander] may kiss the Gospel. An acolyte (one who assists in celebrating the performance of liturgical rights) returns it to its place.

In solemn Mass

After the General Commander has taken his seat, the prayed Mass is said. The priest and deacons of the vestry, now arriving at the altar, pay homage to the sacred rubrics, whether or not they are deposited in the Altar of the Holy Sacrament. Once the priest completes this he and the deacons express their forgiveness [of the Commander] by nodding their heads and they begin the Mass. Two chaplains of the vestry, wearing the surplice, emerge and take his [Commander's] confession, as was done in the prayed Mass.

The Gospel is sung and the deacon lit the incense, while this is taking place he [the deacon] and the subdeacon remain facing the Altar. Then the deacon takes from the acolyte the book of the Gospel, or the Mass that is about to be said, he takes it and accompanied by the two acolytes, who do not have any candles, to the General Commander. Once they reach the General Commander they do not nod their head in forgiveness until the book of the Gospel has been kissed...once the deacon has returned to the Altar the creed is sung and then the same chaplains say it on

each of their sides (to the right and then the left) as if during confession...¹⁵⁶

It is telling that copies of this document were sent to various churches throughout the north in the 1790's. One has to wonder if perhaps these kinds of rituals of respect towards colonial officials had been given less attention by colonials and local officials had to be reminded of the acts in an attempt to impose a hierarchical system on an increasingly diverse and complex society. In her study of the Corpus Christi festival in colonial Mexico City, Linda Curcio-Nagy argues that it was the ruling elite's fear of growing instability that brought about the creation of policies to counter social dissent. Festivals helped to combat these social stresses as "diverse ethnic groups were captivated, entertained, and acculturated by state and church in order to counteract potential dissidence and to reaffirm institutional legitimacy in a time of social change."¹⁵⁷ During the Bourbon period the state tried to "implement a new social morality" as the "status quo was now perceived as capable of restructuring, albeit temporarily, the social hierarchy."¹⁵⁸ James Scott calls these overt expressions of governmental power "public transcripts." He notes that they are rigidly controlled by elites, who do

¹⁵⁶ "Ceremonial que se observa en esta Iglesia Parroquial de Chihuahua cada vez que viene á ella el Señor Comandante General de las Provincias Internas, Don Pedro de Nava," August 23, 1794. Libro num. 2 de Gobierno, Iglesia Catedral de Saltillo.

¹⁵⁷ Linda A. Curcio-Nagy, "Giants and Gypsies: Corpus Christi in Colonial Mexico City," In *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Popular Culture in Mexico*. Edited by William H. Beezley, Cheryl E. Martin and William E. French (Wilmington, Delaware: SR Books, 1994): 2.

¹⁵⁸ Curcio-Nagy, "Giant and Gypsies," 19.

not want anything to detract from the idealized version of society presented in ritual acts.¹⁵⁹

In a way, this ritual seems to further substantiate the importance of these local leaders in the eyes of their social inferiors, but as James Scott notes, "elites are also consumers of their own performance."¹⁶⁰ Like most public rituals, this event had a public component intended to amaze and subjugate non-elites. Yet, most of it took place within the confines of the church, where only a section of society (most probably its most illustrious members) would be present. Therefore, it also was clearly intended to reaffirm the importance of the Spanish elites' role in the colonial system. As we will see, this process also needed to be confirmed, so that members of the elite would not disrupt the colonial hierarchy.

Even though this performance was designed to establish a racial and class hierarchy that subservient groups were supposed to emulate, this hegemonic ideology rarely remained unquestioned by other social groups. Spanish settlers knew how their society was governed and the roles they were expected to play. This did not however mean that they did not at times write out a different script and gave different meanings to these government rituals. The colonial elite was not always a coherent group. This is vividly exemplified in a 1737 dispute involving the *capitán protector* of San Esteban, and the town councils of both

¹⁵⁹ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990): 50.

¹⁶⁰ Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 49.

Saltillo and San Esteban, over seating arrangements in public gatherings.¹⁶¹ This episode also outlines the Tlaxcalans' place in this region's social hierarchy.

In May of 1737 the town council of Saltillo met to discuss a problem they believed threatened to disrupt the structure of their society. The matter that needed to be resolved was where the *capitán protector* of San Esteban would sit during public events. Evidently, the town councils San Esteban and Saltillo, as well as the *capitán protector*, Juan Antonio Fernandez de Casafernisa, had previously agreed that he would sit at the front of the church with the other two *cabildos*. The captain insisted that it had been his understanding that he would sit in a bench preceding both councils. The Saltillo council argued that Casafernisa had misunderstood the arrangement and that he was only allowed to sit in the front when the most important members of the Saltillo council could not attend an event. They were indignant that he would even believe that it was proper for the council to sit behind him. They said that his interpretation of the agreement was, "incompatible and opposed to all reason and laws."¹⁶² They scoffed at his presumption and said that it was only because of "politics" that he had been allowed to even sit with the *cabildo* of Saltillo. This probably meant that the protector had not been elected, but because he was well-connected he had therefore been able to garner a royal appointment. They concluded this meeting

¹⁶¹ David B. Adams mentions this episode in, "Borderland Communities in Conflict: Saltillo, San Esteban, and the Struggle for Municipal Autonomy, 1591-1838," *Locus* 6:1 (fall 1993): 45-46.

¹⁶² "...incompatible y opuesto a toda razon y leyes que de esto tratan..." 1737, AMS, PM, c14, e13, 5f.

by agreeing that Casafernisa needed to be called in to the next council meeting where with "all urbane communication and peaceful tranquility" he would be made to understand the genuine wisdom of the celebrated agreement.¹⁶³ Their conspicuous use of the word "urbane" is reminiscent of what Cheryl English Martin discusses in the northern enclave of Chihuahua. In her research she encounters the use of the words, "poca urbanidad" ("little urbanity") and "palabras urbanas" ("urbane words") used to describe "polite interpersonal exchanges" amongst Spanish settlers.¹⁶⁴ That appears to be the manner in which the Saltillo town council is using the word "urbane." In the Chihuahua example, officials used the word "urbane" to describe the acts of subordinate groups, like Indians. The Saltillo council is speaking about a man that is in their own social circle, but who is acting contrary to what they believe to be the proper behavior of one of their own class. It is meant to rein in someone from their own status who could not be readily dismissed as someone from a subordinate class might have been. In a way, Casafernisa's behavior was much more dangerous than having someone from another (clearly subservient) group question their authority,

The protector's behavior evidently had great symbolic meaning. The council of Saltillo could not have been more explicit about this fact when they

¹⁶³ "...con toda urbana correspondencia y tranquila paz se le de a entender la genuina inteligencia de el celebrado trado..." AMS, PM, c14, e13, 5f.

¹⁶⁴ Cheryl English Martin, *Governance and Society*, 76-80.

spelled out exactly how seating was to be arranged and alluded to why this had to be so. They stated:

...in the occasions he [the *capitán protector*] goes to the Church for a solemn event, even though he is given a seat in the bench of the town council [Saltillo's] he is to sit behind the Justices, if the *Alcalde Mayor* or the Lieutenant attend, he will sit behind the *Alcalde Ordinario de Primer Voto*, and if he does not attend he will sit behind the *Alcalde de Segundo Voto*, and if he does not attend he will sit behind the most senior *Regidor*. Only in this conformity will this agreement be valid. The said *capitán protector* should also be advised that it is his fault that this agreement has been defaulted upon, since one of the points of the agreement was that the *República de Indios* should have their own seat in another bench independent of the one belonging to the town council [of Saltillo]. Theirs should either be in front or behind the bench belonging to the town council or alongside that of the Spaniards: this was not the way things were practiced in the Pueblo's [of San Esteban] Church, instead he wants for this town council and that of said Republic's to sit on the same bench...¹⁶⁵

Evidently, Casafernisa's questioning of the seating order had broader social implications, as it also confused race and class hierarchies. As a Spaniard it was his responsibility to abide by what the Saltillo town council decreed, as it further affirmed the roles played by Spanish and indigenous members of this society.

The public transcript was fractured when elites failed to "create the appearance of

¹⁶⁵ "...en las ocasiones que concurriese en la iglesia a alguna solemnidad, aunque se le dara asiento en el escanlo de cabildo a de ser precediendo la justicia esto es que si el Señor Alcalde Mayor ni su Theniente concurriesen, precedira al Señor Alcalde de Segundo ya falta de este el Señor Regidor más antiguo, y que en esta conformidad y no de otra tendra validacion el combenio celebrado, y tambien se le adbierta a dicho Capitán Protector, que no a dejado de adbertirse en este cabildo el que por su parte se a faltado a lo tratado, pues siendo uno de los puntos de la escritura que la Republica de los Naturales a de tener su asiento en otra banca independiente de la de el cabildo o ya sea enfrente al lado de la epistola o ya seguida a la de los españoles, no lo a practicado así en la iglesia de aquel Pueblo, sino quiere que en una misma banca tenga asiento este cabildo y aquella Republica..." AMS, PM, c14, e13, 5f.

unanimity amongst the ruling groups."¹⁶⁶ This public exercise in hegemonic domination was for a moment broken, because of this minor act of "rebellion."

On June 29, 1737, the town council met again to discuss this matter in greater detail. In this meeting Casafernisa stated that it was his understanding that he would sit in the front area during a public event and that what they wanted to do was solely based on a particular interpretation they wanted to give to the previous agreement and consequently he was determined to defend his stance "with all due force."¹⁶⁷ The town council minutes read:

...all of this was attended to by the said town council in the best possible wisdom and attention and they tried not to injure his pride: they advised him that what was proposed and was previously agreed upon by the Señores Capitulares was very fitting and that the rest was a monstrosity that they could not allow it as it was opposed to the laws of the kindgom. They did not think that he should go to Church if he wanted to follow etiquette that was so far outside what was appropriate: what kind of terms could there be in order to decide this point without causing a disruption in the Church. The best thing would be for the said *capitán protector* to excuse himself from meeting with this town council...¹⁶⁸

They concluded by citing a dispatch that had been sent by the viceroy back in 1735. In it the viceroy apparently stated that the *capitán protector* should not be

¹⁶⁶ Scott, 55.

¹⁶⁷ "...el dicho Capitán Protector, oponiendose a dicho cavildo dijo que este cabildo se había dado posesión de asiento preferente a los Señores Alcaldes, y que este lo avia de mantener así eran o no el Señor Alcalde Mayor o su Theniente por que de esa manera entendía la escriptura, y que lo deamas era interpretación que le quería dar y que esto lo defendería a toda fuerza, como mejor pudiera a su modo..." AMS, PM, c14, e13, 5f.

¹⁶⁸ "...advirtiendole que lo que se proponía, y acordara por los Señores Capitulares era muy ajustado, y que lo demás era una monstruosidad que no podían permitir por oponerse a las leyes del Reyno, y que tendrían muy a mal el que se fuerla a la Iglesia a que ver hazerla por letra de etiqueta tan fuera de proposito, que terminos avia para decided el punto sin estrepito en la Iglesia, y que el mejor medio sería la instancia por sus terminos regulares..." AMS, PM, c14, e13, 5f.

allowed to "innovate in any manner that is not customary over the issue concerning seating arrangement and questions of jurisdiction" and if he did so he would be fined 1,000 pesos.¹⁶⁹ The town council then concluded the meeting and asked all of their members to sign off on the document describing the events that took place at said meeting (this was done in all council meetings.). As if to confirm the fears of the Saltillo council, one other member refused to abide by their orders. Francisco Xavier de la Zendeja, one of the *regidores*, stated that he would not sign his name to this document because "he was not opposed to the previous decree agreed upon and celebrated between this town council and the *capitán protector*." The Saltillo council asked him if he was aware of the royal dispatch that they had just cited and he responded that,

...he was well aware of said dispatch and that it was not present at the time the said agreement was celebrated, and that it was also true that all that was convened upon in the aforementioned decree from the town council supposedly occurred how it was recorded in the meeting, but even with all this he does not want to sign.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ "...y así mismo se le hizo constar que se hallaban con despacho de el Exelentísimo Señor Virrey de estos reynos librado a diez de Marzo de el año pasado de 1735 en orden y en razon de que el Capitán Protector del Pueblo de San Esteban no inobe en cosa alguna de lo que a sido costumbre sobre la preferencia de asiento y competencia de Jurisdicción bajo de la pena de mil pesos..." AMS, PM, c14, e13, 5f.

¹⁷⁰ "Al tiempo de firmar este auto de cabildo el Señor Regidor, Don Francisco Xavier de la Zendeja, Fiel Executor que se hallo presente en dicha junta, dijo que no quería firmar porque no se opone a la escritura de combenio celebrada entre este cabildo y el Capitán Protector, y aviendole recombenido si no tenía presente que se hallaban los Señores Capitulares con un despacho de el Señor Arzobispo Virrey de estos reynos en orden, a que guarde la costumbre sobre la preferencia de asiento y competencia de jurisdicción: dijo que tiene muy presente el dicho despacho, y que no se tubo presente al tiempo de celebrar la dicha escritura de compromiso, y que también es verdad que todo lo que se contiene en dicho auto de cavildo pasó según y como en la junta, pero que con todo no quiere firmar todo lo cual pasó á la presencia de los Señores de Justicia y Regimiento..." AMS, PM, c14, e13, 5f.

It is unclear what motivated Casafernisa to so vehemently challenge the Saltillo council. He had just recently taken his post and apparently he was still a young man ("un mozo"), so perhaps he was attempting to extend his own power in both communities and had not expected that his act would create such agitation.

A few weeks later, on July 11th, Casafernisa once again came before the council to present a petition drawn up by him and by the council of San Esteban in which the Tlaxcalan *cabildo* expressed their dismay over the present discord between the two councils, especially since they thought an agreement had already been reached. The San Esteban council said that they could not understand why Saltillo now wanted to annul the agreement and that they had written evidence that His Excellency decreed that in these types of cases the Tlaxcalans should do what was convenient for them and could choose to ask for arbitration from the Viceroy if they so desired. The San Esteban council said that they were in no way opposed to the previous agreement, which appeared just to them and asked for copies of the written testimony from the previous council meetings about this topic.

Clearly, neither the *capitán protector* nor the Saltillo *cabildo* were willing to back down. Yet, on the 22nd of July, the Saltillo council did agree that said written testimony of the meetings and the Viceroy's dispatch should be presented to the Tlaxcalans, but only that dealing with the matter at hand. A week later, on the 30th of July, the Saltillo council met once again. They agreed that there could

only be "damaging consequences" if Casafernisa was allowed to go forward with this case. His "whim" was threatening to develop into a more serious matter because of the *capitán's* "stubborn character." They concluded that the root of the problem was that Casafernisa was convinced that he was the *Justicia Mayor* (highest justice) of San Esteban, as well as the protector. This apparent double royal appointment was the reason why no judge from Saltillo could contain or punish him. Consequently, they called witnesses to attest to the captain's "excesses." In addition, they would consequently bring this matter to the attention of the *Alcaldes Presidentes*, as well as the *Presidentes* and *Oidores* from the *Real Audiencia* located in Guadalajara.

What followed could perhaps be seen as a very modern "campaign to discredit" the *capitán protector*.¹⁷¹ The first to testify was Don Joseph Ramon Ramos, a Spanish resident of Saltillo. He claimed to have known Casafernisa since the protector's birth, as he was also originally from the Villa. The protector of San Esteban had always lived with his widowed mother, Doña Antonia María Guajardo. In 1736 Casafernisa was made protector and consequently he and his family moved to San Esteban. Ramos stated that he had known four other

¹⁷¹ In their discussion of the mass media and propaganda Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky note that "it is their (mass media) function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfill this role requires systematic propaganda." Campaigns to discredit or support other countries or ideas are used by the media to in a subtle but effective manner to support the views of the ruling elite or to discredit those that oppose them. This is the media's

previous protectors of San Esteban and none had claimed to be the high justice or war captain. The witness then stated that only Casafernisa's father-in-law, who was also a *capitán protector*, had tried to claim such powers. Like his father-in-law Casafernisa claimed that Saltillo's judges did not have jurisdiction over him and neither did the *Real Audiencia* (appellate court). Ramos also claimed that the protector gambled, placed bets on horse races, and started fights in public streets. In one instance Casafernisa threatened Juan Miguel Ramírez after a cockfight. Said Ramos, "if Casafernisa's tyrannical behavior is not curbed there will be pernicious consequences to the public good, as all this news reaches the miserable Indians."¹⁷² He was presumably speaking about the Tlaxcalans.

The second witness was Don Andres Galindo, also a Spaniard from the Villa. Galindo was a former *alcalde mayor* and was one of the "principal members of the republic." His initial testimony was an almost exact restatement of Ramos's. Galindo said that Casafernisa's behavior was insufferable, as he played *naipes* (card games) and acted as if he were a judge who could preside over civil and criminal matters.

The final witness was Don Juan Figeno, a 35-year old peninsular Spaniard from Seville. He stated that it was unbelievable that a pueblo that was almost

intention, how individuals interpret these images is debatable. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988): 1.

¹⁷² "...todo lo cual haya este testigo que es causa de una continua inquietud y que sino se remedia servira de que se originen muy perniciosas consecuencias a estare publica y así mismo a los Tribunales que debía proteger por la tiranía con que con ellos se porta pues llegan a la noticia de todos los lamentos de los miserables indios..." 1737, AMS, PM, C14, e13, 5f.

inside the Villa could have its own high justice and did not have to consult the judges of Saltillo or the *Real Audiencia*. Don Figeno said that it was well-known that Casafernisa was very "rebellious." Casafernisa spent much time in the Villa where he entered gambling houses, attended cockfights and horse races. He fought and argued at every event and at one time he tried to pummel Miguel Ramírez after a cockfight. Casafernisa took Ramírez's money and afterwards said that if someone wanted to take it away they could try, but he did not recognize or have to abide by the rulings of any judge other than his Excellency (the king). Juan Figeno pointed out that it was also well-known that the mulatto, Miguel Gonzales, who was jailed in Saltillo because he was an accused murderer had escaped and was protected in the church of the pueblo of San Esteban. They consequently placed guards in front of the church. Figeno said he could cite many more instances in both the Villa and San Esteban when Casafernisa had claimed to have jurisdiction over civil and criminal matters.

In his letter to the governor, Casafernisa argued that said witnesses were biased and could therefore not provide an accurate account of events or his character. He once again restated the agreement reached by him, Saltillo and San Esteban and complained that the Saltillo council had issued a ruling that stated that anyone who violated their previous agreement after he had sat with the Saltillo council would be fined. In the end the governor issued what could at best be considered a split decision in the case and said that Casafernisa had to pay the

1,000 peso fine, but that he could sit next to the Saltillo council as had been agreed by said parties.

Conclusion

Although Tlaxcalans had their own government and claimed that only the king and viceroy had jurisdiction over them, the council of Saltillo still played an important role in San Esteban's political life. In essence, Saltillo represented the colonial state. Spaniards did not try to establish authority over Tlaxcalans by force, but by imposing their notions of government. It is therefore understandable that one of the witnesses in the Casafernisa case was so preoccupied that news of their conflict and the protector's insolence would reach the Tlaxcalans. News of this event would diminish the Spaniards' status and power in the eyes of San Esteban.

CHAPTER 3

Petitions and Legal Disputes

Although indigenous people in past times left little record of their personal thoughts and beliefs, they did leave behind a vast paper trail of official documentation. The Tlaxcalans of San Esteban wrote extensively to colonial authorities, usually asking for help in deciding local disputes. Along with these petitions, we also have an extensive number of legal cases that involved the residents of San Esteban and other frontier settlers. These types of sources are not transparent, as indigenous people manipulated them to best influence their outcome.¹⁷³ Yet, neither are they so flawed that we are unable to develop an understanding of local conflicts and the Tlaxcalans' daily concerns. These sources describe how Tlaxcalans lived in these frontier towns and how they were able to negotiate their status in colonial society. Indeed, although at first these petitions and disputes might seem to reveal that indigenous peoples passively accepted their lot in life, the mere fact that the Tlaxcalans and other indigenous groups were so litigious and learned to maneuver within the Spanish legal system

¹⁷³ On official documents produced by indigenous communities, see Arthur J.O. Anderson, Frances Berdan and James Lockhart, eds. *Beyond the Codices: The Nahuas View of Colonial Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

gives testimony to their resiliency. Native peoples helped define colonial life. Indigenous actors "responded to events in ways that helped to determine large parts of their social and cultural reality."¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, these cases illustrate how indigenous communities were in constant contact with the outside world and how they developed mechanisms to protect their community's needs.

Complaints and legal suits that involved the residents of San Esteban in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be divided into three major categories. A large group involved petitions to royal authorities where they complained about excessive labor and church costs.¹⁷⁵ Tlaxcalans felt that local priests unfairly collected rents to maintain the church. They argued that since they performed most of the labor to fix the church building, then they should be exempt from paying for certain religious ceremonies. Moreover, the Tlaxcalans also tried to excuse themselves from paying for the performance of the sacraments, a charge that was paid by all.¹⁷⁶ The second group includes

¹⁷⁴ Arij Ouweneel, "Altepeme and *Pueblos de Indios*: Some Theoretical Perspectives on the Analysis of the Colonial Indian Communities," In *The Indian Community of Colonial Mexico: Fifteen Essays on Land Tenure, Corporate Organizations, Ideology and Village Politics*. Edited by Arij Ouweneel and Simon Miller (The Netherlands: CEDLA, 1990): 3.

¹⁷⁵ Tlaxcalans complain to the king about high tribute payments and rents imposed by authorities in New Spain, 1703. Silvio Zavala and María del Carmen Velázquez, eds. *Temas del Virreinato: Documentos del Archivo Municipal del Saltillo* (Saltillo, MX: Gobierno del Estado de Coahuila, 1990), 49; Edict issued regarding the Indians of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, 1740. Zavala and Velázquez, *Temas del Virreinato*, 58-59.

¹⁷⁶ Decree by Don Francisco de Berdín y Molina stating that the residents of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala do not have to pay for the *fábrica*, 1669. *Ibid.*, 65-67; Resolution reached by the bishop of Guadalajara, 1670. *Ibid.*, 67; Letter by the council of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala to the bishop of Guadalajara, 1670, *Ibid.*, 67-68; Letter by the Council of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, *Ibid.*, 68-69; Order by the viceroy of New Spain stating that the church should not charge the *fábrica*, 1677. *Ibid.*, 34-35; Order issued by the bishop of Guadalajara stating that

complaints, and at times criminal cases, that involved the Tlaxcalans' *capitán protector*. Finally, there are several legal cases and petitions relating to the use of land. Hostilities developed between the residents of San Esteban and individual landowners as land and resources became limited in the eighteenth century, but it was the municipalities of San Esteban and Saltillo who most often came into conflict over these matters.

This chapter therefore discusses both Tlaxcalan and Spanish petitions and legal disputes that involved the residents of both San Esteban and Saltillo. This is because the primary goal is to analyze and understand the daily concerns and problems faced by the Tlaxcalans. In addition, these documents also illustrate how Tlaxcalans utilized and learned to manipulate images, language, and the judicial system to best serve their community. In order to avoid any confusion each document is clearly denoted as being either a legal dispute or petition and its author is also listed. Each section is organized in chronological order, so as to demonstrate how these problems developed over time.

Language and Structure of Sources

The residents of San Esteban wrote extensively to royal authorities, even to the king, throughout the colonial period. These letters and petitions usually discussed disputes over water rights, land, and other civic matters. Tlaxcalans

colonials should not make undue payment and labor demands on the Indians, 1679. *Ibid.*, 59-65; Certification of services given to the church by the residents of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala,

would often refer back to the original sixteenth century documents that were signed by the king and Captain Francisco de Urdiñola, who first brought the Tlaxcalans to Nueva Vizcaya in the sixteenth century. In these petitions they asked that the king step in to defend their rights when the Tlaxcalans felt that local Spanish officials were not acting as the crown intended. More often than not the crown's response was to let the matter resolve itself of its own accord, but at times they also tried to appease the residents of San Esteban by siding with them. Even when the crown did not rule in favor of the Tlaxcalans they apparently were able to ignore many of these rulings, as the same cases keep reemerging.

The Tlaxcalans' manipulation of language reveals how they understood colonial norms and how they defined their relationship with the king and the colonial state. The town council of San Esteban ordered and worded the petitions so as to influence the outcome of the disputes. Their language therefore had a self-consciously deferential tone. Indigenous communities appeared to have a clear understanding of how they were viewed by colonial authorities and consequently they tailored the language and the style of their petitions to make the most use of this identity.¹⁷⁷ In addition, as Matthew Restall points out, this

1713. Ibid., 35-37.

¹⁷⁷ In this respect they were not unlike other indigenous groups. Matthew Restall notes that there were common stylistic aspects in Maya petitions when they addressed high-ranking Spaniards. He writes that the Maya letters were "overtly deferential and self-deprecating in character..." *The Maya World: Yucatec Culture and Society, 1550-1850* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 16.

deferential tone was, "undoubtedly descended from preconquest tradition of rulerly address."¹⁷⁸ Indeed, the following Náhuatl petition to the king from 1560 is not unlike the ones written by the residents of San Esteban. That one begins:

Catholic Royal Majesty

Our lord sovereign, you the king Don Felipe our lord, we bow low in great reverence to you in high dignity, we prostrate and humble ourselves before you, very high and feared king through omnipotent God, giver of life. We do not deserve to kiss your feet, only from afar we bow down to you, you who are most high and Christian and very pleasing to God our Lord, for you are his true representative here on earth, you also govern us and lead us in things of Christianity. All of us creatures and subjects of the life-giving God, we vassals and servants of your majesty...¹⁷⁹

Contrast that sixteenth century indigenous petition to one written in the late seventeenth century by the council of San Esteban. In this 1679 appeal to the king the Tlaxcalans complain that local priests required excessive payments for church services. They write:

...we ask and plead that Your Illustrious Honor protect us in this cause and that you execute a decree that will so accomplish this...despite of the fact that the priest has issued his own petition...and in so doing Your Illustrious Honor will do us a great good and will bring us justice...we protest any prejudices that might be enacted towards us, and we also ask that you order that this petition be sent back to us so that we can later use it to ask for justice when it is necessary...¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Restall, *The Maya World*, 252.

¹⁷⁹ Anderson, Berdan, and Lockhart, *Beyond the Codices*, 178-179.

¹⁸⁰ In the following Spanish quotes I have kept the original spelling. "...pedimos y suplicamos como a quien viene cometido por Su Señoría Ilustrísima sin embargo de la apelación el mandamiento de Su Señoría Ilustrísima sin embargo de la apelación interpuesta a él por el dicho cura doctrinero, pues en este caso no se le debe admitir por la obediencia que prometió tener a Su Señoría Ilustrísima por razón de dicha doctrina, que en hacerlo así Vuestra Majestad nos hará bien y merced con justicia la cual pedimos y de los contrario, hablando con el debido acatamiento protestamos el perjuicio que se nos pudiere seguir, sirviéndose Vuestra Majestad de mandar que se

In this excerpt the Tlaxcalans refer to the king as their community's "father." This type of address seems to have a clear purpose. By referring to the king as their father, the Tlaxcalan council hoped that, as their ruler, the king would step in to aid them in their time of need, as a responsible parent would do for his children.¹⁸¹

Indeed, in a 1781 letter to their parent colony in Tlaxcala the residents of San Esteban use very similar language as that used when speaking to the king.

They write,

The governor, town council, judges, and administration of this pueblo and province of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxala of Saltillo and the rest of the community, with the most solemnity prostrate ourselves before your greatness...

In whose attention, we expect the highest protection and solace and as we have spoken about certools that will help us defend our privileges and...every time that they infringe on us, as has been done by them [Villa] in the past, and in these terms we explain all that has befallen us, and so we will be able to restore our dishonor. As your sons it should be that you participate in helping us attain these wishes and pleasures, and so we are obliged every time we see your letters...We do not wish to bother you but we ask and plead that you see us as your sons and will be served to acknowledge these complaints, as they are many, because of the loyalty that we have always professed.

nos devuelva esta petición original con lo proveído a ella y las diligencias fechas en esta razón para ocurrir a pedir nuestra Justicia a donde más nos convenga y pedimos Justicia en todo lo necesario..." Letter by the town council of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, 1679. Zavala and Velázquez, *Témas del Virreinato*, 60.

¹⁸¹ Matthew Restall writes, "The Maya thought of rulers as protectors—a Mesoamerican image, as we have seen—and it is in this spirit that the appeal of these petitions is made; in the ideal world of petitionary hopes, good rulers protect the people from the bad rulers, the latter defined in turn by their failure to protect." *The Maya World*, 259.

May God Our Father always protect your important and great lives so that you will be able to help us, your humble sons, may we both have years of happiness. Main hall of this Pueblo of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala of Saltillo, August, 15, 1781. ¹⁸²

The Tlaxcalans also emphasized their dire economic circumstances and continuing poverty as reasons why they needed the king's protection. Although the residents of San Esteban certainly faced difficult conditions in northern New Spain, they also use this information strategically in order to sway the official's rulings. In a 1794 legal dispute between San Esteban and Saltillo, the Tlaxcalan council writes: "...because we [Tlaxcalans] are poor, they make us wait as long as they wish, all they would need to do is send an official or a mayor to let us know

¹⁸² "El Gobernador, Cabildo, Justicia y Regimiento de este pueblo y provincia de San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala del Saltillo y demás común... con la más debida solemnidad postrados ante la grandeza de ustedes...

En cuya atención, esperamos el mayor amparo, y consuelo como tenemos referido de algunos instrumentos, en que podemos defender nuestros privilegios. Cada que nos ofrezca (contravención), en donde como en los demás que da él han procedido, y en estos términos explicamos todo lo que nos ha acaecido, y restituimos nuestra deshonras. Porque como hijos de ustedes es fuerza que sean participen en nuestros gustos y placeres, y quedamos obligados cada que veamos las letras de ustedes, la que rendidamente, y con todo nuestro fraternal amor ejecutamos.

Omitimos el molestar refiriéndoselos con mayor expresión y pediimos y suplicamos que mirándonos como a sus hijos, se sirvan de admitir estos nuestros descargos por bastantes en virtud de la ya consabida lealtad que siempre profesamos, y lo más que pedimos, y hacemos patente a ustedes en esta nuestra consulta que será como siempre lo mejor.

Dios Nuestro Señor guarde la importante vida de la grandeza de ustedes para amparo de éstos, sus hijos humildes, en ambas felizidades muchos años, Sala Capitular de este Pueblo de San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala del Saltillo, y Agosto, quince de mil setecientos ochenta y uno." Last letter sent by the 400 families descendant from Tlaxcala to their parent community. August 15, 1781. *Colección de documentos para la historia de Tlaxcala y México. Por el Coronel Miguel Lira y Ortega. Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala.* (Tlaxcala: FONAPAS, Coordinación General de Desarrollo Municipal); 193-199.

if the matter is of importance...if it was of great importance then we would all attend these meetings..."¹⁸³

In a 1679 letter, where they complain about high church costs, the San Esteban council discussed how these payment requirements were excessive, in light of their poverty. They write:

We received the dispatch from Your Honor with much joy and since you are like a father you have therefore deemed it correct to consider our misery and unhappiness as this land is harsh and difficult to work in. It is full of gentile Chichimecas and we are often among them. It has been sixty-nine years since our ancestors settled this town and they have left us with the same miseries and we have never paid fees to the church...and until this day we repair and fix said church, making sure it looks well in all aspects, adorning it on holidays, and the priest still wants us to pay...¹⁸⁴

In this passage the Tlaxcalans also discuss their primary role- to help pacify the Chichimecas. The Tlaxcalans were conscious of what was expected of them by royal authorities. Although the Tlaxcalans were sent to Christianize and

183 "...dicho señor Alcalde por cosas muy leves sin más mérito de irnos aser presentes y de allí mal despachadas como cosa de irrición y como quiera que somos pobres de ningún caudal nos obligan a estar esperando hasta las horas que sus mercedes les antoja, pues con que vaian un regidor o un Alcalde vastará para saber si algo se ofrecia en el oficio y cuando se ofreciera cosas grandes fueros todos." Letter by the town council of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcalan to the governor of Coahuila, 1794, *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila. Fuentes Documentales/Biblioteca Tlaxcalteca*, ed. Carlos Manuel Valdés Davila and Ildefonso del Bosque (México: El Colegio de San Luis/Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala, 1999): 257.

184 "Recibimos el despacho de Vuestra Señoría Ilustrísima y en ello mucho gusto en haber merecido enviarnos el mandamiento de Vuestra Señoría Ilustrísima y al fin como padre y Señor nuestro se ha condolido de nuestras miserias y desdichas en esta tierra tan corta y tan trabajosa de enemigos chichimecos genditiles donde estamos casi entre ellos cada día con mil susidios; hace sesenta y nueve años que nuestros antepasados poblaron este pueblo y en él nos dexaron siempre conforme hoy con las mesmas miserias y jamás hemos págado obenciones a los mnistros de doctrina, ...y hasta el día de hoy la estamos reparando y aderezando procurando su lucimiento en todo lo que en ella se ofrece, adornándola los días festivos y con todos estos ciudadanos queres nuestros padres ministros de doctrina les paguemos sus obenciones sin que les falte ni un real..."

acculturate nomadic indigenous groups, this did not take place. The Tlaxcalans remained ethnically united and the community did not appear to have incorporated other native peoples.

Finally, in a 1742 petition where the Tlaxcalan council complained about their *capitán protector* they write:

... as our only wish is to be able to live in peace, which is why we protest as we do, in order to blindly obey the superior's mandates as we have always done ...we therefore need to petition superiors as we are fearful and need protection...we request your royal interference because as ministers of the king you will be able to attend to our needs with charity, piety and under the watchful eye that our helplessness demands as is the royal spirit of your majesty as God keeps it because we do not have any protection under the human world at this time, this gentleman has absolute power in this town and we have nowhere else to turn because of our orphan status...we hope that Your Honor will intervene to mediate this injustice... We are very poor, so we plead that Your Honor will provide and decide in our favor and in so doing we will receive the reward of justice as we so petition...we plead that you accept this petition even though it does not have a royal stamp.¹⁸⁵

Letter by the town council of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, 1679. Valdés and del Bosque, *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 61.

¹⁸⁵ “Motivos todos que nos ynstimulan el temor a ser los patentes a Vuestra Merced para que en aquel modo que en derecho pueda y deve lo contenga para que nos deje vivir en pas que solo eso es nuestro animo protestando como protestamos a obedeser siegamente los superiores mandatos de los superiores como lo emos echo siempre sin que se entienda bulnear la jurisdicion y aunque conosemos que la de Vuestra Merced no se entienda a tanto...La necesidad de careser de superior recurso por la gran distancia en que de el estamos el temor nos unstimula a ampararnos bajo la protecion de Vuestra Merced ynplorando su real empleo para que como ministro de nuestro Señor el Rey nos atienda y mire con la caridad, piedad, y selo que pide nuestro desamparo como es el real animo de su magestad que Dios guarde porque devajo de lo humano no tenemos por aora otro rrecurso por considerarse este cavallero absoluto en este pueblo sin tener nuestra orfandad a quien ocurrir que lo contenga en bista de todo lo qual por conbenir a nuestro derecho se a de servir Vuestra Merced justicia mediante mandarnos dar zertificacion de todo lo acaesido sobre este asunto que a Vuestra Merced, Consta, como asi mismo de aberse empeñado ha nuestra suplica ynterponiendo sus respectos para con dicho señor theniente nuestro protector a fin de que nos dejara bivir en pas sin bolentarnos sobre este asunto asta tanto que lo determinase el Superior Gobierno...A Vuestra Merced pedimos y suplicamos se sirva prover y determinar como pedimos que en aserlo asi resiviremos merced con justicia la que devidamente ymploramos en el Real empleo de Vuestra Merced que atendiendonos con la caridad, y Zelo que pide materia tan piadosa

The Tlaxcalans refer to themselves as "helpless," but as we will see this does not accurately describe their behavior. It appears to be a self-conscious attempt to play on the Spanish view that indigenous people were "childlike" and needed protection from royal authorities. Indigenous people were neither childlike nor helpless, despite of how they were treated by colonial authorities. Magnus Mörner notes that in the sixteenth century indigenous peoples' status was in many ways equal to that of minors. They were obliged to pay tribute and labor for Spaniards by force, but they were also excused from paying certain taxes. They did not have to serve in the military, but could not carry arms or ride on horseback (in this case the Tlaxcalans were an exception, as one of the privileges given to them by the king was that they could carry firearms). They had special "protectors" (like a *capitán protector*) and could not be tried by the Inquisition, but they could not enter into contracts or buy liquor. Later in the colonial period indigenous communities were created, in part to distance them from the corrupt influence of Spanish settlers. Yet, these *Republicas de Indios* were also easier to control by the Spanish colonial state.¹⁸⁶

nos proteja resiviendonos vajo el amparo Real en aquel modo que le puede ser permitido en derecho sin que se entienda en esta suplica ynobediencia en nosotros ni bulnerar la jurisdizion pues solo asemos por alcansar justicia juramos en evida forma costas protestamos y en lo nesesario y otro si a Vuestra Merced suplicamos nos admita este escrito en el presente papel por no aberlo del sello que le corresponda sin perjuicio del Real derecho utsupra." Tlaxcalan petition to viceroy, Town council of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala issue complain against their protecting captain, 1742. Ibid., 163-171.

¹⁸⁶ Magnus Mörner, *Estado, razas, y cambio social en la Hispanoamerican colonial* (México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1974): 29, 91-92; In her recent study of race in colonial Mexico

Another way the Tlaxcalans supported their legal claims was to remind the crown of their loyal service. They believed that they had a reciprocal relationship with their ruler and that their efforts to help the Crown should be rewarded in kind. There are several royal certifications given by the Crown to the residents of San Esteban in recognition of their help in establishing other colonies in the northeast.¹⁸⁷ In a 1728 petition they write:

...we solicit the greatness and sovereign attributes, charity and conscientiousness [of the king] so that we will receive justice [from him] and so we have said for one-hundred and thirty seven years, since our ancestors, the original Tlaxcalatecas of the Gran Tlaxcala[.] In virtue of this Royal Edict that we are supposed to enjoy and which we present with veneration so that your Illustrious Lordship will be aware of what has been allotted to us since this *Pueblo* was founded. In virtue of said decree our ancestors and we, as *fronterizos* that we are, have helped maintain Your Majesty's dominions in war and peace...we have suffered robberies and thefts from the rebellious Indians and we have redeemed many of these barbarians by leaving our town and have populated the Reyno de León; a town in Real de San Pedro de Boca de Leones named San Miguel de Aguayo and other towns in

Laura A. Lewis argues that indigenous groups were both infantilized and feminized by colonial authorities. *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, and Caste in Colonial Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 57-60; On perceptions of indians as "children" in the colonial world see, Louise Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahuatl-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989, 17; Inga Clendinnen, "Disciplining the Indians: Franciscan Ideology and Missionary Violence in Sixteenth-Century Yucatan," *Past and Present* 94 (1982): 43; Woodrow Borah, *Justice by Insurance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983): 30.

¹⁸⁷ Certification issued by the capitán protector and mayor of Saltillo, Don Buenaventura de Aguirre, in recognition of help given by the Tlaxcalans of San Esteban to the Canary Islanders who were on their way to San Antonio, 1731. Valdés and del Bosque, *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 153-155; Certification issued to the Tlaxcalans after they helped establish the settlements of Nuestra Señora de la Purificación and Nuestra Señora de San Juan de Carrizal, 1749. Ibid., 181-184; Certification given by the authorities of Nuestra Señora de la Purificación for help given by the residents of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala in establishing their town, 1749. Ibid., 185-188; Certification issued to the Tlaxcalans of San Esteban for helping to establish the settlement of Parras, San Francisco de Coahuila, Nuestra Señora de la Candela, San Miguel de Aguayo, Guadalupe de la Purificación, and Concepción, 1760. Ibid., 213-216.

Nuestra Señora de la Purificación, as well as another in Nuestra Señora de la Concepción and another in Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe and in the province of Coahuila the pueblo of San Francisco and San Fernando de la Candela. Likewise this town has colonized the Valle de Santa María de las Parras...¹⁸⁸

As we will see, Spanish settlers also outlined their loyal service to the Crown to support their legal cases.¹⁸⁹ Perhaps the Tlaxcalans were following the example set by European settlers. By the eighteenth century colonial authorities apparently placed less emphasis on this type of information and considered written documents as more valid sources to support land claims. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

In light of these examples, we must therefore read and consider the following case studies as deeply complex documents that both tell a story about

¹⁸⁸ "...solicitando de la Grandeza de su soberano atributo y carydad y buen celo el alivio que con justicia debemos gozar y decimos que ha más de ciento y treinta y siete años que por nuestros causantes Naturales Tlaxcaltecas de la Gran Tlaxcala, en virtud de Real Cédula por Su Magestad que Dios guarde se pobló este Pueblo concediéndonos los Privilegios que por dicha Real Cédula consta debemos gozar, la que presentamos con debida veneración para que a su Señoría Ilustrísima le conste lo que se nos es concedido y desde el tiempo que se fundó este Pueblo en virtud de dicha provisión nuestros antepasados y nosotros, como fronterizos que somos, hemos mantenido en paz y en guerra estos Dominios de Su Magestad a nuestra costa y mención y a costa de nuestras vidas, y padecer robos y latrocinios de los Indios rebeldes de Real Corona, habiéndose utilizado de este Pueblo la redención a muchos bárbaros saliendo a poblaciones de este dicho Pueblo la redención a muchos bárbaros saliendo a poblaciones de este dicho Pueblo al Reyno de León naturales e hijos de este Pueblo; un Pueblo al Real de San Pedro de Boca de Leones que se intitula San Miguel de Aguayo y otro Pueblo en Nuestra Señora de la Purificación y otro que Nuestra Señora de la Concepción y otro en Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y en la Provincia de Coahuila el Pueblo de San Francisco y el de San Fernando de la Candela. Como asimismo se pobló de este Pueblo el Valle de Santa María de las Parras..." Letter by the town council of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala to the bishop of Guadalajara, 1728. Zavala and Velázquez, *Temas del Virreinato*, 39.

¹⁸⁹ The town council of Saltillo files suit against the authorities of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, 1660. Valdés and del Bosque, *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 91.

conflict and survival, but also describe an indigenous society that struggled to seek justice and to preserve the most valued aspects of their culture.

Complaints Relating to Excessive Church Costs and Unpaid Labor

Religion played an important role in the lives of the residents of San Esteban. Their participation in church life, as well as their individual devotion to the Catholic faith was central to their world. Yet, the Tlaxcalans' apparent acceptance of Christianity did not deter them from questioning the actions of the local clergy. They did not hesitate to seek outside help when they felt their local parish priest was treating them unjustly. For instance, in 1669 the San Esteban town council complained to authorities in Guadalajara that the Franciscan priest then in charge, Antonio de Ulibarri, demanded that they help maintain the church, as well as perform other types of labor, but had refused to pay them for these services.¹⁹⁰ The Tlaxcalans argued that they made daily repairs and decorated the church during every holiday, but the priest still required that they pay the *fábrica* (money paid to the church by parishioners to help maintain the building). Tlaxcalans felt that they should be excused from paying for baptisms, marriages, and funeral proceedings because, in their eyes, they provided free labor to the

¹⁹⁰ "...os ruego y encargo que reconoscais los aranceles de los derechos de los curas y aberiguareis si exiden de ellos, o si son excessivos, y en caso de serlo los hareis minorar para aliviar a los indios...", Order issued by the bishop of Gadalajara, 1669. Zavala and Velázquez, *Temas del Virreinato*, 65.

priest and had already paid a five hundred peso yearly rent fee.¹⁹¹ The Tlaxcalans felt that it was their church and because they worked to maintain it any additional payments were unfair.¹⁹² Consequently, Father Ulibarri refused to perform any more religious ceremonies until he received these dues. The Tlaxcalans went on to say that although a child from their community had recently died Father Ulibarri refused to bury him until he was paid for the four pesos and two *tomines*. In addition, the priest no longer allowed the Tlaxcalans to light candles or make offerings of wine and bread for their deceased in the cemetery. Indeed, in a record that lists the payments made by the Tlaxcalans to the church it does appear that they could not afford to pay these minimal charges. In one such example, Pablo Serrano, a resident of San Esteban, paid two pesos for the burial of his son, but because he could not pay the other one peso he had to bury his son outside of the church cemetery.¹⁹³ The Tlaxcalan council highlighted these unfair and, in their view, irregular practices in the following letter. They write:

Likewise, we declare that our guardian priest, the *Cura Vicario* Fray Antonio de Ulibarri, on the Day of the Dead displeased the residents of this town by not letting us light candles before mass, being that each person makes offerings [*ofrendas*] of candles, bread, and whatever else they can afford, and our priest sends people to blow out these candles saying that the wax used for the candles is of the wrong kind¹⁹⁴...the residents are unhappy because

¹⁹¹ Letter by the town council of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala to the bishop of Guadalajara, fray Juan de Santiago de León Garavito, 1679. *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 68..

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁹⁴ Castilian wax was apparently the only kind that could be used in altars. In a 1772 petition, local officials in Saltillo complained that there was a lack of Castilian wax. Officials at that time

they see that their ofrendas are taken away from the graves of their parents and relatives...Illustrious Lord may you order that the sons of Your Illustrious Lordship are not distressed, what is stated above is the truth and we swear to God and the cross that this is the truth...and seeing as we are poor and we do not have anyone else to turn to...we are subject to the conditions of war continually, leaving our region seeing as we must to punish our enemy, as is certified that we have left said *Pueblo* to perform services for God and Our King...¹⁹⁵

Although excessive church payments were the Tlaxcalans' primary concern in this petition, they also took this opportunity to detail how authorities in Saltillo harassed them. They write:

Señor, we dare to notify you with this petition that we are not allowed to enter the countryside to collect firewood or to let our cattle graze, they have even restricted us from collecting water [.] We therefore also turn to Your Majesty in order to notify you that the lieutenant [from Saltillo] has let us know that we are not to leave the area without his permission and if he finds us in the countryside we will find ourselves hanging from a tree or he will send men out to beat us....¹⁹⁶

decided that altars only needed to have six candles made of pure Castilian wax. Archivo de la Iglesia de la Catedral de Saltillo, Libro numero 2 de Gobierno, June 19, 1772, 2.

¹⁹⁵ "Asimismo decimos y declaramos como nuestro padre Guardián Cura Vicario doctrinero frai Antonio Ulibarri, el día de la conmemoración de los fieles difuntos, da poco gusto a los vecinos deste Pueblo no dejando encender luces antes de Misa, siendo así que muchas personas llevan sus ofrendas de cera y pan en lo que pueden cada uno, y que se pone de cera, por ser menuda no lo contenta. Otrosí: manda meter las ofrendas de cera y pan en el altar mayor y muchos de los vecinos están descontentos en ver quitar sus ofrendas sobre las sepulturas de sus padres y parientes. -Illustrisimo Señor mandará que no sean desconsolados los hijos de Vuestra Ssa. Illma. que esta es la verdad que ha dicho y declarando lo arriba referido y jurar a Dios y a la Cruz ser cierto su declaración, y agora que más convenga en todas nuestras necesidades y trabajos y pobreza, y siendo así que somos pobres no tenemos de donde poderlos adquirir que es la tierra corta. Otrosí: estamos sujetos a la conducción de las guerras continuamente saliendo a nuestra costa y mención cada y cuando que se ofrece para castigar al enemigo, como consta de las certificaciones que tenemos en dicho Pueblo a los servicios hechos a Dios y al Rey nuestro Señor que dios guarde muchos años..." Zavala and Velázquez, *Temas del Virreinato*, 67.

¹⁹⁶ "Señor atrevemos notificando por auto el no pasar el monte por leña quitándonos el pasto que no pasemos con nuestros ganados hasta el agua nos han impedido, siendo así que estamos acudiendo en los servicios de Su Magestad y también nos notificó dicho teniente no salgamos sin licencia suya al campo ni aun una cuarta de legua si nos cogiere en dicho campo que nos dejará

As we will see later in this chapter, access to land and water was necessary for survival in this frontier society and bitter disputes developed over these resources.

Father Ulibarri asked that justice be served in this matter and argued that he was only abiding by previous decrees issued by a royal tribunal in Mexico City that required payment by all groups for the sacraments. Despite his protests, in this instance, the bishop of Guadalajara supported the Tlaxcalans. He addressed this matter in a 1679 letter where he advised local priests that they should not mistreat or make undue demands on their parishioners and neither should they require excessive payments for the sacraments. He wrote, "I plead and ask that an inquiry be made to find out if the church tariffs are excessive and if they are they should be lessened so as to lighten demands on the Indians."¹⁹⁷

The Tlaxcalans thanked the bishop for the his help, but also reminded church authorities that the Tlaxcalans in the north should not be confused or placed on equal standing with the "*indios laboríos*" (working Indians) when the church decided how much each group would pay for religious services.¹⁹⁸ The San Esteban council writes, "...thank you for sending help at such a favorable time...do send an edict where we are not confused in status with the *indios*

colgados en una palma o que nos mandaría apelohear..." Letter written by the town council of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala to the bishop of Guadalajara, 1679. Ibid., 61-62.

¹⁹⁷ Edict issued by the bishop of Guadalajara, 1679. Ibid., 59-60.

¹⁹⁸ Letter by the town council of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala to the bishop of Guadalajara, 1669. Ibid., 68.

laborios."¹⁹⁹ "Working Indians" were possibly the nomadic indigenous peoples that were placed in missions, worked in the mines, lived in people's homes as servants, or were enslaved.²⁰⁰ The Tlaxcalans distinguished between themselves, those who made their living off the land and not from the labor they performed for others, and other indigenous groups that were not able to have their own family farms. In this same document the Tlaxcalans discuss their poverty, but also their special privileges and exemptions. The Tlaxcalans' belief that they were special or distinct from other northern indigenous groups becomes even stronger later in the colonial period, as the term "Indian" acquired a more negative connotation. The residents of San Esteban, or at least the town council and other town leaders, fought to preserve their privileges by advocating that they were in fact not simply "Indians," but had primordial rights and a noble status that made them different. The Tlaxcalans are not fighting to protect the rights of indigenous people, but of their self-defined community.

When the bishop visited in 1682 he issued a new decree that required all frontier residents to pay for the sacraments, as this was what the bishops in Mexico City had previously mandated.²⁰¹ This ruling did not stop the town council of San Esteban from petitioning church authorities once again in 1728, to

¹⁹⁹ "...muchas gracias en habernos enviado a tan lindo tiempo el remedio...mandando hacer arancel que haya y que no se nos entremeten en igualdad los indios laborios." Ibid., 68.

²⁰⁰On Indian slavery in the north see, José Cuello, "The Persistence of Indian Slavery and Encomienda in the Northeast of Colonial Mexico, 1577-1723," *Journal of Social History* 21:4 (1988).

complain about these payments. This issue continued to be a point of discord between the church and the Tlaxcalans for many years, as church leaders continually reissued orders that spelled out payment requirements for each parish and costs that needed to be paid by each *casta*.²⁰²

Complaints against the *Capitán Protector de Indios* of San Esteban

Another source of frustration for the residents of San Esteban was their relationship with their official protector, or the *capitán protector de Indios*. Conflicts with these colonial appointees are documented in petitions filed by the Tlaxcalans or by the protector himself. Such episodes were also recounted in criminal records or by complaints made by the town council of Saltillo.

There were several edicts issued by colonial authorities concerning the activities and jurisdiction of the *capitanes protectores*.²⁰³ In 1630, the viceroy, Don Rodrigo Pacheco y Osorio, issued a brief in response to complaints made by the general captain of Nueva Galicia, Agustín de Cavala Caballero. In this decree he admonished both the *capitanes protectores*, as well as the mayors of Spanish townships, and stressed that they needed to stay out of each other's

²⁰¹ Edict issued by the bishop of Gadalajara, fray Francisco de Rivera, 1682. Zavala and Velázquez, *Temas del Virreinato*, 38-39.

²⁰² Archivo de la Iglesia de la Catedral de Saltillo, Libros de Gobierno.

²⁰³ Statement discussing the jurisdiction of the *capitán protector de indios*, 1630. Valdés and del Bosque, *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 87-90; Edict issued against the abuses of the Protectores de Indios, 1720. *Ibid.*, 141-146; Viceroy issues decree against the actions of the *capitán protector* by request of the Indians, 1732. Zavala and Velázquez, *Temas del Virreinato*, 47-48.

jurisdictions.²⁰⁴ These types of royal decrees did not seem to deter either party from harassing indigenous peoples. In 1720 another *Real Cedula* was issued reminding local officials of the *Recopilación de Indias*, which forbade Spanish settlers from directly associating with indigenous groups or from buying their property.²⁰⁵ It advised the *capitanes protectores* of this fact and reminded them that they needed to protect the indigenous population from the abuses of Spanish settlers.²⁰⁶ This edict was issued in response to ongoing complaints made by indigenous communities about their *protectores* and it concludes by saying, “the *capitanes protectores* should be notified and should abide by his majesty’s orders.”²⁰⁷

The *capitán protector's* primary role was to protect the Tlaxcalans from harm, but at times he created problems in both the communities of San Esteban and Saltillo by trying to extend his powers. In an incident that took place in 1739,

²⁰⁴ Statement discussing the jurisdiction of the *capitán protector de Indios*, 1630. Valdés and del Bosque, *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 87-90.

²⁰⁵ Edict issued discusses the abuses committed by the *Protectores de Indios*, 1720. Ibid., 141-146.

²⁰⁶ “...por las leyes cincuenta y cuatro y cincuenta y cinco del libro segundo titulo de dies y seis de la recopilacion de ella que proiven que los presidentes ministros alcaldes ni oficiales no traten ni contraten ni se cirvan de los yndios ni conpren casas chacanas estansias guertas ni tierras y resuelto por mi Real decreto de onze de este mez ordenar que las personas que obtubieren los referidos oficios de protectores de yndios esten comprendidos en la prohivision de penas que señalan las expresadas leyes con la comun limitasion de las asiendas heredadas para ympedir no yncurra en semejantes abusos respecto de la maior facilidad que les dara el tener a los yndios devaxo de su mano por tanto mando a mis virreyes de amvos reynos de Nueva España y el Peru y...” Indigenous uprising in Castaño and Monclova. Citation in recognition of help given by a Tlaxcalan, 1720. Ibid., 147-151.

²⁰⁷ “...para que se le haga notorio a los cappitanes protectores de yndios que hubiere en dicho partido que guarden puntualmente lo que se magestad manda sin yncurir en cosa alguna debajo de

and that is described in a petition written by the San Esteban town council, the protector went on a drunken rampage that started on September 9th of that year and did not end until two days later when he was incarcerated on the eleventh of September. This was only after said *capitán protector*, Don Cristobal de los Santoscoy, attacked the mayor of Saltillo, Don Antonio Fernandez, who had earlier jailed Santoscoy's brother. The mayor imprisoned Santoscoy, but only after he received a bloody nose in a scuffle with him. Santoscoy was released from jail the following day, but this only slowed him down for a short while. The protector and two other men went on a drinking binge the following night, but this time they brought their guns with them and demanded to see the mayor. After declaring that the "judges in the villa [of Saltillo] did not have jurisdiction over him," Santoscoy was arrested once again. Santoscoy was indignant and demanded to be informed why he had been jailed in the first place.²⁰⁸ The mayor of Saltillo chastised Santoscoy for harassing the residents of San Esteban and for generally providing a bad example in their township and in the area at large.

A few years after this episode the Tlaxcalans again complained about the behavior of their *capitán protector*. In 1742 the Tlaxcalan governor and town council contacted royal authorities to protest about the abusive behavior of Mauricio Delgado, the current captain. Delgado had apparently seized the cattle

los aperevimientos que refiere dandome cuenta de las dilixencias que hiziere." Edict issued against the abuses incurred by the *Protectores de Indios*, 1720. Ibid., 141-146.

that belonged to the residents of San Esteban and then imprisoned the Tlaxcalan governor and some of the members of the town council. When the Tlaxcalans demanded that they be released, Delgado took hold of one Tlaxcalan by his hair and tried to beat him. He imprisoned members of the San Esteban town council and threatened to remove them from their posts. Finally, on the third day of this debacle, the mayor of Saltillo, Don Christobal Sánchez, was able to negotiate the release of the Tlaxcalan governor and town council members who were also imprisoned. Captain Delgado demanded fifteen pesos from the governor of San Esteban to pay for the expenses incurred by their imprisonment. Blas Dionicio, the Tlaxcalan governor, then told Delgado that he did not have such money. Delgado continued to demand this payment and to threaten the citizenry of San Esteban. This Tlaxcalan petition therefore asked that the viceroy step in to protect his vassals by removing this individual from his post. Delgado continued to threaten the Tlaxcalans and warned them not to seek help from other authorities, for council or protection. It is unclear how this matter was resolved, as there is no record of a response from the viceroy.²⁰⁹

Complicated disputes over who had ultimate authority in San Esteban seemed to form a central part of the Tlaxcalans' lives. Although the townships of San Esteban and Saltillo were only divided by one street, they were different

²⁰⁸ Criminal case against Don Cristobal de los Santoscoy, protector of the Tlaxcalan Indians, 1739. *Ibid.*, 157-161.

political entities and were under different colonial jurisdictions. Saltillo was under the political and administrative government of Nueva Vizcaya, with its capital in Durango. Judicially it was under Nueva Galicia, with its capital in Guadalajara. San Esteban was under the direct jurisdiction of the viceroy of New Spain and under the judicial jurisdiction of Mexico's *Real Audiencia*.²¹⁰ Later in the colonial period this chain of command became even more complicated when Saltillo and Parras were incorporated into the region of Coahuila and the Internal Provinces were created. The question of who had ultimate authority created much confusion amongst Spanish settlers and was even more problematic for indigenous groups who oftentimes did not speak Spanish and were unfamiliar with Spanish government. Local officials in the north and at times the Tlaxcalans themselves tried to take advantage of the confusion created by this complex system of government.

In 1746, Don Diego Phelipe Zains de las Cortes, another *capitán protector* of San Esteban, petitioned royal authorities because he believed that he should have singular administrative power in the town and not the mayor of Saltillo, the governor of Nueva Vizcaya, or the *Real Audiencia* of Guadalajara. The residents of San Esteban themselves did not explicitly support his petition. Yet, there are

²⁰⁹ The authorities of the town of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala issue a formal complaint against their protector, 174. *Ibid.*, 163-171.

²¹⁰ Vito Alessio Robles, *Coahuila y Texas en la epoca colonial* (1938; reprint, México: Editorial Porrúa, 1978): 188.

no existing documents where the Tlaxcalans express their opposition.²¹¹ The *capitán protector* reasoned that he was the only one who truly protected the Tlaxcalans from the encroachment of *hacendados*, as well as from the actions of the Saltillo city council. De las Cortes argued that since 1591 it had been customary for the town of San Esteban to only allow the *capitán protector* to negotiate on their behalf. Even though the Tlaxcalans themselves had very little to say in this petition, he used their long history of service to the Crown to support his claim.²¹² De las Cortes states,

...this town of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala has never avoided or expressed any reservations in the occasions that have emerged when the [crown] needed their military service and have provided their assistance in the most efficient manner and have maintained a cavalry unit at their own expense, which today exists to meet the urgencies of war...and so they cannot and should not allow any outside intervention and it is my obligation to defend them as their representative...Saltillo officials have tried to exclude and harass the members of my jurisdiction and have tried to impose their ways in the town of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala.²¹³

²¹¹ It is worth noting that the Tlaxcalans kept an "original" edict from the Viceroy of New Spain dated from 1746. It states that the *capitán protector* had jurisdiction over other entities within San Esteban. In 1777 the Tlaxcalans used this document to petition the viceroy to ask that he appoint a *capitán protector* they approved of beforehand. Viceroy appoints a *capitán protector* to San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, 1746. Zavala and Velázquez, *Temas del Virreinato*, 92-93; The residents of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala write the Viceroy requesting the appointment of Don Felix Francisco Pacheco as the *capitán protector* of their town, 1777. *Ibid.*, 93-95.

²¹² Statement discussing the legal separation of Saltillo and San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, 1750. Valdés and del Bosque, *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 189-200.

²¹³ "...este Pueblo de San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala nunca se a excusado, ni reservado en las ocasiones, y tiempos, que se han ofrecido a la asistencia, ni al ejercicio militar con el empeño, y prontitud mas eficaz, manteniendo desde su fundación un cituado de Caballada competente a su costa, que oy existe para las presisas urgencias de guerra a que han concurrido sin intermisión alguna con el seguro de gosar su fuero y demas pibilegios, que en semejantes actos corresponde, y en su consecuencia no pueden, ni deven permitir yntroducion contraria, y es correspondiente a mi obligacion su defenza en las correspondientes representaciones. Para la presente me han

He argued that Captain Francisco de Urdiñola himself had given Tlaxcalans the right to use lands for their orchards, farms, and homesteads. In addition, Urdiñola legally separated the towns of San Esteban and Saltillo and had stated that the *capitán protector* had jurisdiction in all cases within the political boundaries of San Esteban. De las Cortes also stated that although San Esteban and Saltillo were close to one another, they always had separate jurisdictions. He was correct in this respect, but his assessment that his, "predecessors had always exercised jurisdiction without opposition or contradiction as it is conceded by their title," was more difficult to prove.²¹⁴ De las Cortes concludes by saying that, "as frontier peoples, and as prompt contributors of military service, the Indians of this town have always remained under the jurisdiction of the *capitán protector*."²¹⁵ The royal response that came later that same year decreed that things should continue as had been customary. The mayor of Saltillo was to be notified that he did not have any say in the town of San Esteban and if he intervened in the Tlaxcalans' matters a fine would be levied in the amount of 200 pesos.

This case is telling because, although the Tlaxcalans were not directly involved in this matter, it does appear that the *capitán protector* is speaking on behalf of the community of San Esteban. If the Tlaxcalans supported such a

mobido todo el expresado, y el veer que con novedad la justicia de la Villa de el Saltillo, ha pretendido, y pretende, excluir y pertubar mi jurisdicion, y sujetar a la suya a los naturales de este pueblo de San Estevan de la Nueva Tlaxcala..." Ibid., 189-200.

²¹⁴ "...y en cuia conformidad mis antecesores la han exercido libremente sin ninguna oposición, ni contradición, como que les es concedida por el mismo título y patente." Ibid., 189-200.

petition perhaps it was because they felt it was in their best interest to allow the *capitán protector* ultimate jurisdiction in their town, so they could limit the influence of the Saltillo council in their community. In her analysis of the 1680 Pueblo revolt in New Mexico Lauren Benton points out that indigenous people understood that there were tensions between colonial authority figures or entities and they consequently became adept at exploiting these tensions. Native groups became "astute legal strategists" and often filed legal suits. They complained that they had not been paid for their services and quickly learned to appeal to secular authorities to report the abuses of the friars.²¹⁶ This seems to reflect how the residents of San Esteban learned to deal with colonial officials in the north. The fact that they sought out the input of the king, viceroy, governor, the *capitán protector*, and at times even the Saltillo town council's help would indicate that they were trying to create a type of "jurisdictional confusion."²¹⁷ Thus this frontier situation might have allowed the Tlaxcalans to have some measure control over their own community.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 189-200.

²¹⁶ Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Culture, Legal Regimes in World History; 1400-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 99.

²¹⁷ Benton writes, "Jurisdictional confusion was often a source of disorder. To the extent that it promoted order, it did so not by consistently producing consensus or even a mechanism for institutional adjustment, but by structuring similar conflicts across culturally and economically diverse regions. Participants understood the contests to be simultaneously about definitions of culture and racial distance and about control over resources. These interconnections gave jurisdictional issues their special, central place in the political order of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish America." *Law and Colonial Culture*, 101.

Municipal Discord and Disputes over the Use of Land

Throughout the colonial period the residents of San Esteban competed for resources with large landowners and their neighbors in Saltillo. On three different occasions, for example, the *hacendado*, Juan Recio de Leon, was advised by the Crown to leave the Tlaxcalans alone in their own lands and to stop harassing these groups.²¹⁸ In the last royal brief Juan Recio was told, in no uncertain terms, that he needed to vacate the lands that belonged to the residents of San Esteban.²¹⁹ Although there are no more decrees issued by the viceroy about this matter, Juan Recio was not the last landowner that tried to encroach on Tlaxcalan lands. One bitter clash between *hacendados* and Tlaxcalans occurred with a descendant of Captain Urdiñola, Doña Isabel de Urdiñola, whose hacienda surrounded the township of Parras. Tlaxcalans from San Esteban originally settled Parras in 1598. During the 1770's the Tlaxcalan residents of Parras, who had lost all of their pasturelands, were faced with the prospect of losing their water supply, which was pivotal in maintaining their community's farms. Doña Isabel's goal was to divert all of the water in the nearby area for use in her hacienda. The Tlaxcalans were able to rebuff this powerful landowner's legal attack and maintained partial use of their water rights.²²⁰

²¹⁸ 1716, Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo de Indios, vol. 41, e. 71, f. 90-92v; 1720, AGN, Indios, vol. 43, e. 309, f. 413-413v; 1725, AGN, Indios, vol. 49, e. 86, f. 99-101v.

²¹⁹ 1725, AGN, Indios, vol. 49, e. 86, f. 99-101v.

²²⁰ Ida Altman, "The Marqueses de Aguayo: A Family and Estate History," Master's thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1972: 6.

The Tlaxcalan council's main source of frustration was their seemingly never-ending conflicts with Saltillo over the use of land and resources. These problems might have developed because Spaniards and Tlaxcalans had very different notions about what encompassed common lands. Nevertheless, discord between these two municipalities only seemed to worsen over time. This was because there were fewer areas that remained unoccupied by the end of the colonial period. Residents of both Saltillo and San Esteban complained to royal authorities and condemned each other's behavior and what they believed to be the inappropriate or unfair use of these increasingly limited resources. One such example is a 1660 legal suit brought forth by the Villa of Saltillo. They wanted to stop what they referred to as the Tlaxcalans' "brazeness," as the residents of San Esteban were taking over lands in surrounding areas and building individual homesteads. Saltillo's town council also wanted the Tlaxcalans to fence in their *ejidos* and their ranch animals. Saltillo's mayor, Don Fernando de Ascue y Armendariz, writes, "...we ask and plead that in light of this petition Your Honor will order the said Tlaxcaltecos and their town council to not make use of the said pathway or utilize the lands despite of any excuses they might come up with against this Villa [Saltillo]." ²²¹ They go on to say, "We ask that your honor will

221 "A vuestra merced pido y suplico sea servido en vista de esta petición mandar a dichos tlaxcaltecos y su cabildo no pasen de dicho camino a laborear tierras con ningun genero de pretexto acia esta parte de la villa y todo el asta su longitud como el que no provean a la billa mas casas de la dicha ermita de ospital para abajo por ser en perjuicio de los vezinos de ella y que de continuar de ello se den por propias de la villa y perdidas de ellos como lo que sembraren por ser tierras de la villa siendo viscaya quererlo introducir por Nueva España que en aserlo asi vuestra

be well served to order that said Tlaxcalans and their town council do not use lands from the path that leads to the outskirts of this Villa to the home of *Licenciado Cortés*.²²² The council of Saltillo argued that although the Tlaxcalans had been given certain privileges by the Crown when they first arrived in the frontier, at that time they only numbered a few dozen, but by 1660 there were more than eight hundred Tlaxcalans. They said that they hoped the Crown would support Saltillo's petition, as they had served the king well by helping to pacify the rebellious Indians and still continued to defend this "important frontier" without incurring any costs on the crown. They asked that royal authorities be sent to survey and make appropriate and fair allotments of such lands without "prejudicing the rights of the residents of Saltillo." The Saltillo council writes,

I ask and plead that in light of said supplication Your Honor will send someone to measure the [lands] that are next to said Tlaxcalans without prejudice of the rights of minorities or privileges of this Villa which was first established and has greater rights and as the Spanish are the conquerors and having done this at their own expense...and they have supported this region for such a long time and that you tell them [Tlaxcalans] to abstain from using the measurements they outlined in their petition and that they free up and make available the lands of the Villa [Saltillo] and that the *egidos* and as far as water rights are concerned we ask that they also be curtailed and although initially water was to be used by the community as a whole, there were then only 12 people and now there are more than 800. There are more than 100 families with 2, 4, 8, or 10 children, as well as widows and single people. You

mersed revisará esta villa bien y mersed con justicia la qual pido en lo nesario etcetera." The Villa of Saltillo files suit against San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, 1660. Valdés and del Bosque, *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 91-102.

²²² "...siendo vuestra mersed servido de servir mandar a dichos tlaxcaltecos y su cabildo no pasen a laborear tierras desde el camino que salde de esta villa por la ermita del licenciado Cortes..." Ibid., 99.

must take this frontier region into consideration as we border the Nuevo Reino de Leon on one side and the Real de Mazapil on the other and we help out all of these regions when they are attacked by rebellious Indians that are allied with the Salineros. These numerous nations have killed, robbed and brought fear to the Real de Mazapil, Cuencame and all of the lands reaching as far as the outskirts of Zacatecas. The people of this region have done all of this at their own expense from the time they first came here when they first waged war against the Guachichil Indians.²²³

There is no record of a royal response to this dispute, but nine years later the Tlaxcalans wrote the governor of Nueva Vizcaya and asked him for help in resolving a legal case that once again concerned the use of land. The Tlaxcalans stated that the town council, mayor, constable, and the parish priest of Saltillo had presented them with an edict from the general captain of the region, Juan Antonio de Savia that stated that the Tlaxcalans could not go into the brushland for

²²³ “A vuestra merced pido y suplico cea cerbido de mandar en busta de este y de dichas mercedes midan las que le competen a dichos tlaxcaltecos sin perjuicio del derecho de menoridad y pribilejio de esta dicha villa como primera en tiempo y mejor en derecho y cer conquistadores los españoles y averla echo a su costa y ser la de su magestad y sustentandola tanto tiempo y mandarles con pena se abstengan en aquellas que expresen sus medidas y dexten libres y desenhaarasadas las de la villa y sus egidos y en quanto a la merced de las aguas fecho en las asiendas lo bindieron como consta de la escriptura que ante vuestra merced demostre y de la del agua que ce le ase de la del cerbisio desta villa en su nombre protesto asi en lo uno como en lo otro no le pare perjuicio ni en el criado del molino por que lo que es de la comun y necesita de ello no puede darlo a otro el cavildo maiormente quando en la conciderasion de sus antiguos se juzgaron como doze y oi ai mas de ochocientas personas y el derecho de vecindad y villa nunca se lo pudieron quitar y cer una de las mas importantes fronteras que su magestad que dios guarde tiene y se compone de mas de cien familias de ombres actuales casados y estos con dos quatro ocho y dies ijos sin las de las biudas y solteros y cer frontera de mucha considerasioin en estas partes pues anpara por la una la del nuevo Reino de Leon y por otra la del Real de macapil y sus contornos que es de la galicia y por otra la del Balle de Parras dando los socorros necesarios a dichas partes y rreparando por otra los asaltos y correrias de los yndios alsados que asisten en la probincia de coahuila aliados con los salineros que son muchisimas naciones de donde salen a aser muertes y rovos y tener infrstado y atemorizado al Real de Masapil, Cuencame sonberete y toda la tierra asta llegar a las goteras de Sacatecas, y averlo echo a su costa los vezinos de ella y de los

firewood. They also could not let their cattle or horses graze on the pastures that were in the vicinity of Saltillo or to use their water. If the Tlaxcalans did so they would be fined sixty pesos. The Tlaxcalans' petition states,

The town council and administration of the *Pueblo* of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala appear before Your Honor and we say that we were notified by the town council of the Villa de Santiago del Saltillo of the said edict decreed by Your Honor, in which you order us to appear with the original foundation documents and the land measurements that we now possess and which we now make part of our town and which justify and support our ownership [of this land] during all of these years and we have owned it without contradiction or aversion
We ask that Your Honor send an inspector to visit and provide justice for which we ask for and protest said town council's damaging costs and other expenses that this legal dispute incurs and so we ask for justice."²²⁴

The Tlaxcalans concluded by saying,

...as the gentleman that he is, we ask for the most Christian resolution that is most convenient for the service of God and the king, and so we inform our Excellency so that he may resolve this issue and in doing so his most humble children of this *cabildo* and

guachichiles." The town council of Saltillo files suit against the authorities of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, 1660. Ibid., 91-102.

²²⁴ "El cabildo y reximiento de este pueblo de San Esteban de la nueva Tlaxcala paresemos ante vuestra merced y desimos que se nos fue notificado por el cabildo de esa villa de Santiago del Saltillo a pedimento del dicho cabildo un auto probeydo por vuestra merced, en que mandaba paresieremos con los paperles de la fundacion y medidas de las tierras que oy poseemos de que asemos poblacion ante vuestra merced por las quales consta la justificazion y razon con que las poseemos y tantos años ha las hemos poseydo sin contradizion ni repugnancia alguna atento a todo lo qual. A vuestra merced pedimos y suplicamos las mande ver y visitar provea de justicia la qual pedimos y protestamos al dicho cabildo las costas daños y menos cabos que de este pleyto se nos recreciere y en todo pedimos justicia y en lo necesario etcetera." Ibid., 91-101. "...para la camara de su magestad y así suplicamos a vuestra exelencia vera como caballero tan cristiano aquello que mas convenga para el servicio de Dios y del rey nuestro señor, ynformamos esto a vuestra exelencia para que ponga el remedio que manda dios nuestro señor que en aserlo así recibiran vien y justicia sus muy humildes hijos este cavildo y regimiento de San Estevan de la Nueva Tlaxcala..." The town council of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala write the governor of Nueva Vizcala, 1669. Ibid., 103-107

administration of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala will receive justice...²²⁵

The governor of Nueva Vizcaya, Antonio de Oca Sarmiento, sent his reply eight days later from the mining town of San Joseph de Parral. In it he decreed that the *alcalde mayor* and lieutenant captain of Saltillo, Joseph de los Santoscoy, was not to aggravate or bother the Indians of that jurisdiction and that they should do as the Tlaxcalans preferred. The residents of San Esteban should therefore be left alone in their lands and towns and should be allowed their privileges, grazing areas, and wilderness.²²⁶ He wrote,

...the mayor of the Villa of Saltillo and the lieutenant captain of that frontier should not offend or bother the Indians of that jurisdiction and should treat them as the [Tlaxcalans] see fit, and should let them have access to their lands and town allowing them their privileges, just as had previously been done with their ancestors...²²⁷

225 "...para la camara de su magestad y asi suplicamos a vuestra exelencia vera como caballero tan cristiano aquello que mas convenga para el servicio de Dios y del rey nuestro señor, ynformamos esto a vuestra exelencia para que ponga el remedio que manda dios nuestro señor que en aserlo asi recibiran vien y justicia sus muy humildes hijos este cavildo y regimiento de San Estevan de la Nueva Tlaxcala..." The town council of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala write the governor of Nueva Vizcala, 1669. Ibid., 103-107.

226 "...que el alcalde mayor de la villa del Saltillo, y theniente de cappitan general de aquella frontera, no agravie ni moleste a los yndios y pueblo guardandoles sus fueros segun y como alla fecho asta aqui sus antesesores dexandoles sus tierras, pastos, aguas y monttes libres no ynobando en sosas, yntterin que su santissima desembarasado que sea vaya en la vista general y provera de justicia y el remedio combeniente y en quanto a la discención que a tenido dicho theniente de capitán general como el capitán protector sobre los asentos, yntterin su santissima lo rreconoce la justicia mando que no concurran juntos los dichos a en esto, ninguno en la yglesia del señor San Francisco de la Nueva Tlaxcala. Y pena de mil pesos en reales que aplico por mitad real camara de su magestad y gastos de justicia en que condeno al que lo contrabiniere el señor Don Antonio de Oca Sarmiento, cavallero del orden de Santiago governador, y capitán general de este reyno de la Nueva Viscaya lo mando y firmó..." Statement issued by the governor of Nueva Vizcaya, 1669, Ibid., 103-107.

227 "...que el alcalde mayor de la villa del Saltillo, y theniente de cappitan general de aquella frontera, no agravie ni moleste a los yndios de aquella jurisdicción como prefieren y los dexen en

He finished by threatening to fine those who disobeyed his orders one thousand pesos. The courts ultimately determined that the Tlaxcalans needed to survey the lands that they had originally been given and that they should keep those original allotments. If they failed to abide by this ruling they were to be fined 150 pesos. This order did not deter the Tlaxcalans, as Saltillo and Esteban continued to clash over the use of land and resources for the next 150 years.

There are several reasons why these disputes continued for several generations and increased in the eighteenth century. One factor was that it was difficult to determine which were private and which were public lands. Tlaxcalans appear to be building homesteads on territories that the council of Saltillo does not consider to be private holdings, and the residents of Saltillo are using lands to graze their animals in territories the Tlaxcalans' consider to be their own. Malcolm Elbright discusses the legal difficulties faced by settlers in New Spain. He writes,

Under Spanish law and custom, public land was owned either by the monarch (*tierras realengas* or *tierras baldías*) or by a town or village (*tierras concegiles*). The *tierras baldías* were available for everyone's use, either in common as grazing land, for example, or

sus tierras y pueblo guardandoles sus fueros segun y como alla fecho asta aqui sus antesesores dexandoles sus tierras, pastos, aguas y monttes libres no ynobando en cosas, yntterin que su santissima desembarasado que sea vaya en la visita general y provera de justicia y el remedio combeniente y en quanto a la dicencion que a tenido dicho theniente de capitan general como el capitan protector sobre los acientos, yntterin juntos los dichos a en esto, ninguno en la yglesia del señor San Francisco de la Nueva Tlaxcala. Y pena de mil pesos en reales que aplico por mitad real camara de su magestad y gastos de justicia en que condeno al que lo contrabinere el señor Don Antonio de Oca y Sarmiento, cavallero del orden de Santiago governador, y capitan general de este reyno de la Nueva Viscaya..." The town council of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala issue complain to the governor of Nueva Vizcaya, 1669. Ibid., 103-107.

by a few individuals who would plant a portion of the *baldías* but whose rights to it depended on continued usage. Royal grants of land to individuals or communities were made from the *baldías*. The *tierras concegibles* of the towns and villages fell into two main categories. One was common property set aside for use by all the heads of families (*vecinos*) in the community. These were the *exidos*, the *montes*, the *dehesas*, and the *prados*, each a different type of common land with a specific purpose. The other kind of property owned by a community or municipality were the *propios*. These were lands, or other kinds of property, owned by the town or village as private property and usually rented out by the municipal council with the proceeds going toward public works in lieu of taxes...The legal differences between *propios* and common property was clear in theory, but in practice the same piece of land would be treated both as *propios* and as common property.²²⁸

Another reason why these conflicts continued was that both settlements experienced notable population growth in the eighteenth century. David B. Adams notes that the pueblo of San Esteban was overcrowded despite of the hardships faced by the community and many landless Tlaxcalans had to work as day laborers in Saltillo or in nearby haciendas.²²⁹

Although the 1669 dispute seems to have been resolved in favor of the Tlaxcalans, this was probably only slight relief since they were facing a series of other problems at this time. In August of 1669, the king ordered that the customary maize and meat that was stored and then redistributed to the township

²²⁸ Malcolm Elbright, *Land Grants and Lawsuits in Northern New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994): 87-88.

²²⁹ David B. Adams. "Borderland Communities in Conflict: Saltillo, San Esteban, and the Struggle for Municipal Autonomy, 1591-1838," *Locus* 6:1 (fall 1993): 44-45.

of San Esteban continue.²³⁰ These food allotments were promised to them under the original charters of 1591 when the Tlaxcalans first migrated to the north, but the Tlaxcalans should have been able to grow the provisions necessary to support their town by this point. The residents of San Esteban were apparently having a difficult time sustaining themselves. Eleven years earlier, in 1658, they petitioned the *Real Audiencia* in Guadalajara asking them to send fifteen more families from Tlaxcala in order to bolster their township.²³¹ The Tlaxcalans' difficulties during these early years were clearly exacerbated by the tensions they faced when dealing with the residents of Saltillo.

Disputes between these two towns and over the use and access to land and water continued to preoccupy both parties for the rest of the colonial period. One legal case in fact provided fodder for other disputes, as the Tlaxcalans presented legal papers produced in one to support future cases.²³² The documents produced in the 1669 legal dispute, for instance, became part of another legal battle that took place in 1794. The San Esteban council presented the 1669 decree and claimed that since the time it was issued the Tlaxcalans' were allowed continuous access to the outlying territories, but that the Saltillo council was now trying to deny them this right. They petitioned the governor of Coahuila (San Esteban and Saltillo were now under the jurisdiction of Coahuila and not Nueva Vizcaya) and

²³⁰ August 5, 1669, AGN, vol. 24, e. 268, f. 170v-171r.

²³¹ August 29, 1658, AGN, Indios, vol. 23, e. 149, f. 142-144v.

said that the lieutenant of Saltillo had posted guards in certain areas in order to stop them from harvesting firewood from the countryside. The San Esteban council said that they were not only denied access to this area, but they also claimed they were beaten and that their farming equipment was taken away. This happened to the Tlaxcalan governor himself, Juan de Dios Valverde, as well as to several other men from the town. The Tlaxcalan council claimed that they had reached an oral agreement with the residents of Saltillo. In it the residents of San Esteban were allowed to collect firewood and the residents of Saltillo could freely collect *tacotes*, rocks, and sand from land that was purchased by the Tlaxcalans. The residents of Saltillo used the resources from this land extensively, as the Tlaxcalans complained that, "they were no longer even owners of their own lands" as these neighbors took their cattle into it whenever they pleased.²³³ Yet, the council of Saltillo now denied San Esteban the use of their land. Indeed, there was greater dissatisfaction and discord amongst the residents of San Esteban and Saltillo towards the end of the colonial period.²³⁴ These eighteenth century conflicts and land titles produced by the Tlaxcalans to protect their claims will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter

²³² An extensive 1809 legal case will be discussed in the preceding chapter. It clearly exemplifies the use and meaning of such documents for the residents of San Esteban.

²³³ "Señor es tanto lo que padece este cabildo y común, que no somos dueños ni de nuestros agostaderos, pues a título de fortiquerias meten las muladas y otros bienes de ganados, bueyadas y demás bagajes los vecinos de la villa sin consentimiento nuestro sin hallar remedio ni amparo como se ha experimentado por el señor Aldalde Don Juan de Gorivar el mes pasado de julio..." The town council of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala seek help from the governor of Coahuila, 1794. Valdés and del Bosque, *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 256.

Conclusion

In 1584, when asked why indigenous people litigated so much, the *Indio principal* of Mexico City responded:

Because you don't understand us and we don't understand you and don't know what you want. You have deprived us of our good order and system of government, [and the one you have given us we don't understand]; that is why there is such great confusion and disorder.²³⁵

Indigenous communities spent an extensive amount of time and energy fighting court battles to protect their interests. In so doing, they helped define their relationship with outside entities. There is little record of riots in San Esteban throughout the colonial period. They apparently preferred to use legal means as a form of protest.²³⁶ These sources therefore record the Tlaxcalans' understanding of their ruler's obligations. By presenting their cases and fighting to establish the "rules of engagement" the Tlaxcalans helped to define the social norms of this

²³⁴ These eighteenth century cases will be discussed in the following chapter.

²³⁵ Translated quote appears in, Rik Hoekstra, "A Different Way of Thinking: Contrasting Spanish and Indian Social and Economic Views in Central Mexico (1550-1600)," in *The Indian Community of Colonial Mexico*, ed. by Arij Ouweneel and Simon Miller (The Netherlands: CEDLA, 1990): 60; Original Spanish quote appears in, Alonso de Zorita, *Breve y sumaria relación de los señores de la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Ediciones de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma, 1942): 51-52.

²³⁶ Sergio Serulnikov argues that indigenous groups may have viewed legal maneuvering and rebellion as related strategies. "Disputed Images of Colonialism: Spanish Rule and Indian Subversion in Northern Potosí, 1777-1780," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 76 (2); E.P. Thompson argues that riot was a social calamity for peasants. He writes, "...grievances operated within a popular consensus as to what were legitimate and what were illegitimate prices in marketing, milling, etc. This in its turn was grounded upon a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligation, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community, which, taken together, can be said to constitute the moral economy of the poor. An outrage to these moral assumptions, quite as much as actual deprivation, was the usual occasion for direct

society. As Susan Kellogg asserts, although indigenous groups did not win every time, the victories did "establish restraints on the authority of Spaniards."²³⁷

Indigenous groups had to learn to maneuver within the Spanish colonial system. It was certainly the only way they could survive. Despite the fact that many did not speak Spanish and struggled to ebb out an existence, their town councils spent extensive time and resources petitioning and fighting legal battles to protect what they believed to be their community's rights. Scholars have used legal disputes that involved indigenous actors extensively, but perhaps we have failed to note the importance these events had for indigenous peoples' themselves. These cases oftentimes went on for years and even generations. If indigenous communities placed such great importance on these legal conflicts it was perhaps because they were fighting over the very boundaries of colonial society.²³⁸ The petitions and legal suits chronicle discord between indigenous groups and their European cohorts, but also the deep impact that the process of colonization had on indigenous communities.

action." "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," in *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York: The New Press, 1993), 188.

²³⁷ Susan Kellogg, *Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture, 1500-1700* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), xxiv.

²³⁸ Benton, *Law and Colonial Culture*, 126.

CHAPTER 4

San Esteban's "False Titles"

In 1809 the residents of San Esteban presented the *alcalde mayor* of Saltillo with an edict issued by Spanish authorities. Tlaxcalans hoped that this 1631 decree would help resolve their land dispute with the Villa de Saltillo. It began:

...I [the lieutenant governor] will send an order stating that no judge can innovate in anything that has been established since its [San Esteban's] settlement until today ...I therefore issue a decree stating the following:

The lieutenant governor and general captain states that an order should be given so that the *alcaldes mayores* of the Villa de Santiago de Saltillo comply and follow custom relating to the amount of water that has been given to said Indians without prejudicing the Villa and in the matter of not allowing them to go to the forests to cut wood they should once again follow the custom that has been established until today...²³⁹

²³⁹ "...mandare dar mandamiento para que ningun alcalde ynoben en cosa de las que se han usado desde su fundación hasta agora ni quite a los naturales...provey un auto del tenor siguiente=El señor teniente de governador y capitan general dixo que se de mandamiento para que los alcaldes mayores de la villa de Santiago de Saltillo guarden y cumplan y hagan guardar y cumplir la costumbre que se ha tenido en razon del agua que se les ha dado a los dichos yndios sin perjuicio de la villa y en razon de impedirles, en no dexarles yr a los montes a cortar leña se guarde assi mismo la dicha costumbre que se ha tenido hasta oy y en razon de las mulas que los labradores les quitan a los dichos yndios las minifiesten luego que las cojeren ante la justicia el qual les haga tasar y pagar el daño que hubieren causado en sus sementeras sin las matar ni quitar ni maltratar castigandoles a quien lo contrario hiziere con todo rigor y assi lo proveyo..." AMS, PM, c1, e7, 16f. Carlos Manuel Valdés Dávila and Ildefonso Dávila del Bosque, *Los tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila* (San Luis Potosí: El Colegio de San Luis/Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala, 1991): 290.

Although the outcome of this legal matter is unknown, it was most likely the case that this decree was dismissed by local Saltillo authorities, as that is what was done with previous ones.²⁴⁰ Saltillo officials found it very difficult to believe that these were in fact original royal documents or faithful copies of royal decrees that preserved Tlaxcalan lands or rights. It was not in their best interest to take edicts presented by the residents of San Esteban very seriously.

Until recently these types of records have received little attention from scholars. James Lockhart surmised that it was because these papers were “patently inaccurate, poorly informed, false, and even in some sense deliberately falsified, often in the most transparent fashion.”²⁴¹ Although scholars still debate whether or not the documents are real, their actual value lies in the fact that they can tell us much about indigenous beliefs and the problems that affected indigenous people. Indeed, some scholars do not view them as “falsified” titles, but as indigenous creations- a new mode of expression.²⁴² These records are of great historical value, not because they are “real,” but because they express the

²⁴⁰ In a 1768 land dispute case the Saltillo town council demanded that the Tlaxcalan council present the original titles and decrees issued by Spanish officials to prove that they owned their land. This was despite the fact that the residents of San Esteban had previously already done so, most notably in a 1729 case that will be discussed in this chapter. The town council of Saltillo then presented the residents of San Esteban with their own set of settlement documents from 1591. AMS, PM c1, e3. Valdés and del Bosque, *Los tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 11-52.

²⁴¹ James Lockhart, “Views of Corporate Self and History in Some Valley of Mexico Towns: Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Colonial Latin American History Review* 1 (1982): 371.

²⁴² Joaquín Galarza. *Lienzos de Chiepetlan* (México: Mission Archéologique et Ethnologique Française au Mexique, 1972): 23.

communities' own understanding of history and local custom. For indigenous people history was not apolitical, it had a clear purpose- to record past wrongs and past resistance to these transgressions.²⁴³

This chapter analyzes three documents presented by the Tlaxcalan council in legal cases between the towns of Saltillo and San Esteban. They range in date from 1729 to 1809. In these cases the residents of San Esteban tried to defend themselves from the encroachment of land and the usurpation of water or other rights by those outside the town of San Esteban. Like other similar indigenous documents, such as primordial land titles, it is unclear if the San Esteban records were in fact real or created by the town council of San Esteban to help support their claims. Although this chapter will address this issue, its most pressing goal is to decipher what these documents tell us about the community of San Esteban (as they were in fact the most likely authors of these chronicles). An analysis of these records will help us understand the Tlaxcalans' concerns, the political dimensions of written and oral history and the Tlaxcalans' understanding of local custom.

²⁴³ David Frye states, "...I would contend, the memories of Patricio Jiménez and of the struggle over the appropriation of the canal both derive from an oral tradition of recalling and reinterpreting acts of resistance to the power of the haciendas. The history presented in the petition may be chronologically inaccurate, even self-servingly so, but it faithfully depicts an enduring antagonism between the people of Corte and the large landowners." *Indians into Mexicans: History and Identity in a Mexican Town* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996): 179.

The Primordial or "False" Titles Genre

These San Esteban documents are not unlike the land title deeds presented by other indigenous towns to Spanish colonial authorities during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Scholars refer to such documents as "primordial titles."²⁴⁴ Indigenous peoples claimed that these records were the original or copies of original foundation documents where the Spanish decreed that their pueblo owned the land under dispute. Many of the central Mexican examples were written in Nahuatl and usually spoke about the territories that historically belonged to the community from pre or post- conquest times. In addition, they discussed the arrival of the Europeans, land allocation by colonial authorities, the construction of important buildings, and other matters important to the community.²⁴⁵ These titles also discussed the indigenous communities' adherence to Christianity and their "claim that the ancestors gained their right to the town's territory 'through war and dying.' "²⁴⁶ Furthermore, the primordial titles expressed the communities' own version of their local history. These highly politicized records tell us much about indigenous peoples concerns during the second half of the colonial period. Moreover, it is worth noting that their appearance at this time

²⁴⁴ Lockhart, James, "Views of Corporate Self and History in Some Valley of Mexico Towns"; Robert Haskett, "Visions of Municipal Glory Undimmed: The Nahuatl Town Histories of Colonial Cuernavaca," *Latin American Historical Review* 1 (1992); Stephanie Wood, "El problema de la historicidad de los títulos y los Códices de Techialoyan," In *De tlacuilos y escribanos. Estudios sobre documentos indígenas coloniales del centro de México*. Edited by Xavier Noguez and Stephanie Wood (Zamora, Michoacán: El Colegio de Michoacán, 1998).

²⁴⁵ Wood, "El problema de la historicidad," 167-168.

²⁴⁶ Lockhart, "Views of Corporate Self," 386

was probably due to the changes in land ownership laws during the seventeenth centuries.

Seventeenth Century Changes in the Land Tenure System

In 1660 the *procurador general* (attorney general) of Saltillo, Francisco de Treviño, asked the *alcalde mayor* and *capitán de guerra* of Nueva Vizcaya to stop the residents of San Esteban from using land that they argued was in Saltillo's jurisdiction. They said that the Tlaxcalans were using this land for farming and to build their homesteads. Not surprisingly, the *alcalde mayor* of Salillo, don Fernando de Azcue y Armendariz, sided with the residents of the Villa. In response, the Tlaxcalans wrote Saltillo authorities and stated:

The town council and administration of the pueblo of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala appear before Your Honor to say that we were notified by the town council of the Villa of Santiago de Saltillo about the decree sent by Your Honor, where you order that we appear with the foundation papers and the land measurements for the land that we now possess and where we reside[.] It is a fact that we possess them for many years and we have possessed them without contradiction or repudiation. We ask and plead that Your Honor send someone to visit and provide us with justice...²⁴⁷

²⁴⁷ "El cabildo y reximiento de este pueblo de San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala paresemos ante vuestra merced y desimos que se nos fue notificado por el cabildo de esa villa de Santiago del Saltillo a pedimento del dicho cabildo un auto probeydo por vuestra merced, en que mandaba paresieremos con los papeles de la fundasion y medidas de las tierras que oy poseemos de que asemos poblazion ante vuestra merced por las queles consta la justificazion y rason con que las poseemos y tantos años ha las hemos poseydo sin contradizion ni repugnancia alguna atento a todo lo qual. A vuestra merced pedimos y suplicamos las mande ver y visitar porvea de justisia la qual pedimos y protestamos al dicho cabildo las costas daños y menos cabos que de este pleyto se nos recreciere y en todo pedimos justicia y en los nesesario etcetera." AMS, PM, c1, e37, Valdés and del Bosque, *Los tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 96.

What made this dispute different from previous ones was that the Tlaxcalans were asked to present written documents that certified that they owned the land where they resided or had chosen to use as the town's population grew. The residents of San Esteban most likely began to create their own documents certifying that they owned the land in question soon after receiving this request from authorities in Saltillo. H.R. Harvey believes that since most of these "falsified" land title documents began to emerge at a similar time, the mid-seventeenth century, that there was one event that might have influenced their emergence. This event was that of *composición*, or the "review of land titles and a monetary assessment by the Crown in return for the granting of a clear title," in 1643.²⁴⁸ Other studies seem to support Harvey's assessment. Kevin Terraciano and Lisa M. Sousa have not found an example of this type of "false" title that predates the mid-seventeenth century.²⁴⁹ The request made by the Saltillo town council in 1660 therefore came at around the same time that royal authorities began to require titles to substantiate ownership of land.

Although the *composiciones* might have been the primary reason that indigenous groups started to produce documents that certified their land ownership, legal disputes over land also started to emerge with greater frequency in the seventeenth century thus making the creation of these records necessary.

²⁴⁸ H.R. Harvey, "Techialoyan Codices: Seventeenth-Century Indian Land Titles in Central Mexico," *Supplement to the Handbook of Middle American Indians: Ethnohistory*, vol. 4 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986): 162-163.

An increase in litigation is evident in many indigenous communities. William Taylor has thus noted this phenomenon in Oaxaca and points out that in 1799 the Viceroy of New Spain bemoaned the "endless stream of Indians descending on Mexico City" to engage in lawsuits.²⁵⁰ The cause for this increased litigation appeared to be an increase in the total population of New Spain and the expansion of haciendas, which strained indigenous lands and resources.²⁵¹

The Documents

The documents discussed in this chapter range from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. I selected records from such a broad timespan in part because they give us a clearer insight of the Tlaxcalans' understanding of their

²⁴⁹ Kevin Terraciano and Lisa M. Sousa. "The 'Original Conquest' of Oaxaca: Mixtec and Nahuatl History and Myth," *UCLA Historical Journal*, vol. 12 (1992): 32.

²⁵⁰ William Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972): 83.

²⁵¹ Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion*, 392; Terraciano and Sousa, "The 'Original Conquest' of Oaxaca," 33; Robert Haskett, "Visions of Municipal Glory Undimmed: The Nahuatl Town Histories of Colonial Cuernavaca," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review*, 1:1 (1992), 34; Enrique Florescano, "El canon memorioso forjado por los *Títulos primordiales*," *Colonial Latin American Review* 11 (2002), 184; Richard Salvucci writes, "...population growth among Mexico's native peoples, for whom maize was a staple, slowed after 1750. If agricultural supply did not decrease (costs were not increasing) and if the growth of demand moderated (population increase slowed), there was no reason for the price of maize to rise. Still, rise it did... You would expect an increase in demand to be at the root of the change, but no such increase occurred. Yet there is an explanation. In the eighteenth century, the big fish ate the smaller one. Haciendas expanded at the expense of peasant farmers. In economic terms, monopolists, who could set prices, swallowed up peasant farmers, who merely took what they could get. Later in the century, when the weather was especially bad, haciendas could set prices with even greater impunity, for they could store grain and peasant farmers could not. In other words, what [Richard] Garner calls 'changing land-use patterns' explains why cereal prices rose even though there was no obvious shortage of arable land. As the production of cereals became more concentrated, prices increased even more rapidly. It wasn't diminishing returns, but diminished competition that was to blame." "Economic Growth and Change in Bourbon Mexico: A Review Essay," *The Americas* 51:2 (1994): 223.

own history and the problems they faced in the northern provinces. In addition, the mere fact Tlaxcalans pointed to the sixteenth century privileges that were allotted them when they first settled in the north whenever they felt that Spaniards infringed on their rights tells us much about their understanding of history and the methods they use to protect their interests. Tlaxcalans did not see their present-day problems as existing outside of broader historical traditions. As Steve J. Stern points out, oftentimes when analyzing “peasant” societies it might be best if the historical timespan was expanded in order to explain what the motives were behind a social movement. He writes:

Peasants, almost by definition, interact with state structures and overlords, and in many culture areas this political inheritance embraces centuries and partly defines the issues at stake in rebellion. When the Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata was asked why he and his peasant armies were fighting, he pointed to a box of old colonial land titles. For the peasants of Revolutionary Morelos, the relevant time scales included not only the changes introduced under the recent rule by Porfirio Díaz (1876-1910), not only the immediate policies of their Constitutionalist contemporaries, who betrayed the peasants’ version of the revolution, but also a centuries-long struggle over land that defined the peasants’ aspirations and understandings of proper rights and obligations in their relations with the state.²⁵²

The records in question are similar in that they were most likely part of legal conflicts over resources between the Saltillo and San Esteban. The 1729 and 1809 cases are clearly part of a litigation process. The 1781 chronicle does not directly address why the town leaders produced these papers, but it almost

certainly resulted from land disputes. The 1729 case contains a copy of royal decree that restates Tlaxcalan royal privileges and is said to be from 1607.²⁵³ Amongst other topics the decree discusses how the Tlaxcalans arrived in the north, their royal privileges and the original town leaders.

The 1781 chronicle begins by describing how the present town council of San Esteban traveled to Tlaxcala to copy royal decrees that outlined their primordial rights. This document does not present an extensive discussion of the Tlaxcalan's history in San Esteban, but it does explicitly point out that those current members of the council were related to those original four-hundred settlers.²⁵⁴ They copied two documents, one dating back to 1591 and the other from 1629.²⁵⁵

In the 1809 case the Tlaxcalans address the governor of Coahuila and in their petition they present excerpts of documents ranging in dates from 1607-1691.²⁵⁶ They also discuss the Tlaxcalans' history in the region, their primordial rights, and what they believe is previously established customary practice relating to land and water use.

Steve J. Stern, ed. *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18th to 20th Centuries* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987): 12.

²⁵³ AMS, PM, c11, e27. Valdés and del Bosque, *Los tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 69-81

²⁵⁴ It reads, "...como las cuatrocientas Personas Varones en cuyo número entran los dichos nuestros padres que fueron a la dicha Población eran y fueron Principales conicidos de las cuatro cabeceras de esta Ciudad y provincia..."

²⁵⁵ AMS, PM, c33, e50. Silvio Zavala and María del Carmen Velázquez, eds. *Temas del Virreinato: Documentos del Archivo Municipal del Saltillo* (Saltillo, MX: Gobierno del Estado de Coahuila, 1990): 84-90.

²⁵⁶ AMS, PM, c1, e7, 16f. Ibid, 285-297.

Authenticity of San Esteban Documents

There is evidence to suggest that the records presented by the San Esteban council were influenced by the Tlaxcalans, who paid for the transcription of the documents, and by their immediate concerns, namely to uphold their legal case. For example, by continually insisting that what was included in each document was real and had not been changed in any way the author is expressing their understanding that Spanish authorities doubted the record's veracity, but at the same time they cast even greater doubt on their authenticity. The 1781 document reads,

And so it should be clear that the previously discussed information and original decrees that remain in my power and...this transfer is true and real, and I followed said request and order in the city of Tlaxcala on the ninth day of the month of June of 1629, Pedro Xaramillo y Lopes Sanches and Christóbal de Urdanivia, residents of this city, were witnesses to its extraction and correction. I vow that this is true. -Before me Pedro de la Gasca, public scribe. I took six pesos and not any more. I attest. It concurs with the original'

We the governors, town council members, and the justice and administration of this Pueblo of San Esteban de La Nueva Tlaxcala of Saltillo say: that having taken these [documents] out and transferred the Royal Privileges that belonged to the Caciques of this said pueblo and the information they contained for the Principales of the illustrious and loyal city of Tlaxcala [and] who by our order was told to take extract and not add, change or cross out in any way this said town council certifies that it was extracted faithfully and legally. The witnesses were don Josef Martín Balverde and Christóbal de León, neighbors and residents of this said pueblo, who signed along with us and before the scribe who attests to this on this fifth day of March of 1781. And so that it is

evident wherever it is required that these nine pages are of common paper that is real.²⁵⁷

In an 1809 legal case the Tlaxcalans present decrees by royal administrators, such as Captain Urdiñola, to support their land claims. The edict, which is dated May 9, 1607, reads,

...and some of the neighbors and people from said Villa [Saltillo] and its jurisdiction have intended and intend to enter into said town [San Esteban] to take away some [lands] because they say they are not theirs and that the lands do not belong to them [Tlaxcalans] but said Indians have many titles detailing the privileges and land distributions I made when this town was founded, as well as to the donations that the said town council and neighbors made and later were purchased and they asked me to protect them and to not allow for those lands to be taken away for any reason, not any part of them nor allow their possession to be disrupted as they owned them and continue to own them.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ 'Y según consta y parece por la dicha Información y autos originales que quedan en mi poder a que me refiero con los cuales se corrigió este traslado y va cierto y verdadero, y de el dicho Pedimento y Mandamiento dí el presente en la Ciudad de Tlaxcala a Diez y nueve días del mes de Junio de mil seiscientos y veinte y nueve años siendo testigos al verlo sacar y corregir Pedro Xarrillo y Lopes Sanches y Christóbal de Urdanivia Vecinos de esta Ciudad.- En testimonio de verdad.- Ante mí Pedro de la Gasca Escribano Público.- Lleve seis pesos Derechos y no más.- Doy Fee.- Concierta con el Original.' Nos el Gobernados, Cabildo, Justicia y Regimiento de este Pueblo de San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala de el Saltillo Decimos: que habiendo sacado el escribano de este Cabildo el presente treslado del Real Privilegio que les pertenece a los Caciques de este dicho Pueblo y las informaciones insertas contenidas por los Principales del muy insigne y leas Ciudad de Tlaxcala quien por Nuestra Orden fue mandado sacar a la letra sin que para ello se haya visto añadir quitar o tildar cosa alguna en cuya consecuencia zertificamos nos dicho Cabildo haberlo sacado fiel y legalmente. Fueron testigos al ver corregir y consertar Don Josef Martín Balverde y Christóbal de León vecinos y moradores de este expresado Pueblo quienes firmaron con nosotros y por ante el Escribano de quien da fee y es dicho en cinco días del mes de Marzo de mil setecientos ochenta y un año.- Y para que conste donce convenga va en estas nueve foxas escritas de papel común ser cierto. Ut surpa." AMS, PM, c33, e50. Zavala and Velázquez, eds. *Temas del Virreinato*,90.

²⁵⁸ "...y algunos vecinos y personas de esta dicha villa y su jurisdiccion han pretendido y pretenden entrarse en ellas y quitarles algunas por decir son suyas y pertenecerles teniendo como tienen los dichos yndios titulos de ellos muy bastantes a que de las mercedes y repartimiento que les hizo al tiempo de su fundación como de las donaciones que el dicho cavildo y vecinos les hicieron y de las que despues han comprado y me pidieron les ampare en ellas y no concienta que en ninguna manera se les quiten ni ninguna parte de ellas ni sean perturbados en las posecion que de ellas han

This passage reveals much about the Tlaxcalans' eighteenth century concerns and the lengths that they are willing to go to defend their lands. What is also evident is that the territory the Tlaxcalans possessed had been given to them, perhaps in a very informal manner, and was paid for later- either with money or through their labor. Consequently, they came to possess their lands through mutual agreement and no written title was drawn. This social arrangement might have worked in earlier times, when there were vast amounts of land, but seventeenth century legal and demographic changes made this type of agreement obsolete.

In addition, all the documents claim to be copies of original foundation documents, but there is different information in each. The privileges discussed are similar, but each record includes different ones or at times certain privileges are not even discussed or are only mentioned briefly at the end. As we will see, this was probably because the San Esteban council tailored the records to fit their present needs. Yet, the differences in each document could also be attributed to the fact that many sixteenth century documents were in bad shape and consequently unreadable. Another possibility was that the scribe had decided to or had been forced to summarize the original document's content.²⁵⁹

One could conclude that these documents are reconstructed stories created to support the Tlaxcalans' legal cases, but also that these stories were probably

tenido y tienen." AMS, PM, c1, e7, 16f. Valdés and del Bosque, *Los tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 287.

derived from the town's own oral history that was passed down from generation to generation. Although there are discrepancies, the amount of similarities would seem to indicate that the community of San Esteban had a collective memory and that these historical events played a role in defining their local identity.²⁶⁰

San Esteban's View of Tlaxcalan Origins in the North

Although some of the information in these papers is inaccurate or incongruous they by and large retell a foundation story that had apparently become ingrained in the community's memory and was passed down from one generation to the next. The story presented in the records usually begins when the viceroy bemoans the miserable and dangerous situation in northern New Spain, as nomadic Indian tribes violently destroyed, killed, and robbed Spaniards when they made their way to the mines. Viceroy Velasco thought it best that the leaders of these tribes (*caudillos/captains*) bring their people together in towns where they could be policed and taught the Christian doctrine. After these "infidels" were baptized they would develop a sedentary life, would devote themselves to a life of agriculture and in turn would leave Spanish settlers alone. Velasco asked that four-hundred families (or single males) from Tlaxcala resettle in the lands of the

²⁵⁹ Kevin Terraciano and Lisa Sousa have found such summaries in their analysis of Oaxacan titles. "The 'Original Conquest' of Oaxaca," 52.

²⁶⁰ James Lockhart, "Views of Corporate Self and History in Some Valley of Mexico Towns: Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," In *The Inca and Aztec States, 1400-1800*. Edited by George A. Collier, Renato I. Rosaldo and John D. Wirth (New York: Academic Press, 1982): 367-393.

Chichimeca and develop law-abiding Christian towns under the tutelage of the religious orders. This process would peacefully subdue the Chichimecas who would then become loyal vassals of the king.

The foundation story described in the 1729 document begins by discussing the original intention the Spaniards had for Tlaxcalan colonization. It states that Tlaxcalans were sent north to pacify the Guachichil Indians and convert them to Christianity. The Tlaxcalans therefore sent four-hundred married Tlaxcalans north, with the aid of the Franciscans. Captain Francisco de Urdiñola, as the representative of the king, then distributed land to the Tlaxcalans as they saw fit. Spanish settlers were therefore to abide by the original land distributions made by Captain Urdiñola. Urdiñola then named the San Esteban town government. The Tlaxcalans then spoke about their role in the wars against the nomadic Indians where many died. The document concludes by stressing that the land and water rights allotted to the Tlaxcalans by the king not only belonged to the original settlers, but to their descendants in perpetuity. In addition, if anyone disobeyed the decree they would be fined. The document mentions the names of the principal Tlaxcalan settlers who went north in 1591. These names are listed as: Pedro de Murga, Buena Bentura de Paz, Xiconcatl, Don Juachin de Velasco,

Governor Gaspar Clifas, Regidor, Don Antonio de Naveda, alcalde, Lorenzo de Xardillo, fiscal, Gaspar Duarte, escrivano.²⁶¹ [See Appendix 1]

The third document is from an 1809 legal case and contains copies of records that span the period between 1607 through 1631. This collection of papers was once again accumulated as a result of a dispute and consequent litigation between Saltillo and San Esteban. As in previous occasions, the Tlaxcalans attempted to reconcile the conflict by producing copies of their foundation documents. Yet, the San Esteban town council chose not to present copies of the 1591 titles despite of the fact that they most probably were stored in their archive, as they had paid to get those copies during the previously discussed legal cases of 1729 and 1768. These copies once again discuss how Francisco de Urdiñola had allotted land and water rights to the Tlaxcalans in the name of the king, but it dates the settlement of the town to 1607 and not 1591. Pedro de Carvajal is a primary figure in this process, although it misspells his name as "Carvijal." The documents go on to discuss how the residents of Saltillo could not let their grazing animals enter Tlaxcalan areas or they would be fined if they did so. The copy of the 1631 document states that Saltillo should follow the previously established "custom" with regards to water rights. It then discusses how the king had not intended to harm the Tlaxcalans. Tlaxcalan privileges

²⁶¹ Enrique Florescano notes that in the "titles" genre there is a focus on tracing the genealogical antecedents of the town's caciques. He argues that this was so indigenous groups could legally prove that they held those lands were ancestral property "possessed since time immemorial." "El

therefore needed to be protected because they had helped many regions in the north, including Nuevo León, Parras, the rest of Coahuila, and Texas in many ways, such as by participating in wars against the nomadic Indian tribes. The Tlaxcalans go on to say that as conquerors they expected assistance from the crown, as they had helped the Spanish in the region by providing funds for firearms and horses to fight in the Indian wars. Finally, the copy of a 1691 document states that Saltillo did not have jurisdiction over San Esteban and that Tlaxcalans should be treated as conquerors.

These chronicles are very telling; as they give us an idea of the problems the residents of San Esteban faced in the latter half of the colonial period. One of their main concerns was the greater role the council of Saltillo increasingly played in their own affairs. The San Esteban council oftentimes expressed their dismay over what they perceived to be a radical change in their status. Furthermore, the Tlaxcalans did not view themselves as conquered peoples and in fact used this to defend their rights and status.²⁶² In their version of their community's history, they saw themselves as active participants, not as passive actors. This is not unlike how other indigenous groups recorded events dealing with the Spanish conquest. Kevin Terraciano and Lisa Sousa point out that there "was a healthy disregard for the Conquest's negative repercussions...the actual Spanish Conquest

canon memorioso forjado por los 'Títulos primordiales,'" *Colonial Latin American Review* 11:2 (2002); 219.

is either denied or completely ignored."²⁶³ They defined what it meant to be Tlaxcalan, what parts of their culture and history they would leave behind or co-opt from the Europeans in order to survive and succeed in this society.²⁶⁴ Robert Haskett writes,

...their [Nahuatl groups of Cuernavaca] loyalty to the colonial regime was proof of the entire ruling group's loyalty and, by extension, of the loyalty of the *altepetl* itself. For in the process of assembling shreds of a collective memory of bygone times of municipal reorganization and Christianization, the title's authors fashioned a pedigree of corporate worth that was true to colonial realities.²⁶⁵

The Tlaxcalans' histories or accounts were not simply recollections of unrelated events, but reflected their keen understanding of local politics and colonial society.

History and Power

History or historical reconstruction (or myth) was not apolitical for either the Tlaxcalans or the Spanish. They were patently aware that the privileges or

²⁶² Enrique Florescano notes that the *Titulos p'urhépechas* did not present a negative picture of the conquest, European settlement or of Christianity. "El canon memorioso forjado por los *Titulos primordiales*," 188.

²⁶³ Terraciano and Sousa, "The 'Original Conquest' of Oaxaca," 69.

²⁶⁴ In reference to primordial titles used by the indigenous peoples of Cuernavaca, Robert Haskett writes, "A second characteristic trait of all the titles is an emphasis on the ready acceptance of the Spanish conquerors and their Christian faith (glossed as *tlaneltoquiliztli* by Cuauhnahuac's nobility). They aided rather than fought the Spaniards, in one picturesque tale giving food and drink to a weary Cortés seated at a place that came to be known as the 'cross of the *marqués*.' Indeed, the *titulos* authors typically suffer no anguish over the fact of conquest and political subordination inherent in the triumph of the Spaniards." "Visions of Municipal Glory Undimmed: The Nahuatl Town Histories of Colonial Cuernavaca," 7.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 29.

favors given to them by royal authorities shaped how the Crown viewed them and this influenced their own history. Anthropologist Thomas A. Abernethy calls this, "a struggle to mark out relatively autonomous spheres in which to gain control over the meanings of their [European and Indian] lives." A community's history was especially important for indigenous people, as it was through the reconstruction and retelling of history over generations that a collective identity was developed and maintained.²⁶⁶ These documents therefore acquire an added importance, as it is through the commemoration in writing of oral history that indigenous communities transmit their story through time and space.²⁶⁷

The residents of San Esteban helped maintain the memory of historical events alive. These stories helped shape how Tlaxcalans reacted to the challenges they faced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Historical memory therefore played a pivotal role in developing a sense of intergenerational ties and of identity. Indeed, although historians had previously dismissed these types of documents because of the very fact that they were "reconstructed" by indigenous groups to support their legal battles, these titles have an even greater value because indigenous groups may have played an active role in developing them. These chronicles give us an idea of who indigenous communities think they are

²⁶⁶ Thomas A. Abernethy. *Pathways of Memory and Power: Ethnography and History Among an Andean People* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998): 22.

²⁶⁷ Jacques Le Goff. *History and Memory*. Translated by Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992): 58-59.

and who they want to continue to be.²⁶⁸ That is ultimately their greatest value, not whether or not they are "real." Finally, they attest to the importance of historical memory for the residents of San Esteban. It was through this singular way that they protected their rights, status and autonomy within these northern townships. As E.P. Thompson notes, "the popular memory, especially in pre-literate society, is extremely long."²⁶⁹ Indeed, a traditional way Tlaxalans defined their community was to point out that what they were fighting for was and had always been the customary way things had been done for centuries. They could not have defended custom without knowing their own history.

Primordial Rights and Eighteenth Century Realities

The royal decree that the residents of San Esteban most often used to buttress their complaints against local authorities was the one issued in 1591 by Viceroy Velasco. In it he gave the Tlaxcalans in the north the "rights that only *peninsulares* were permitted."²⁷⁰ These passages tell us much about San Esteban's concerns. The privileges in the 1729 case are:

[That] all of the Indians from the province of Tlaxcala and traveled to be with the Chichimecas will always be (along with their descendants) *hidalgos* free of tribute payments, taxes and personal service requirements...they will not be sent to settle amongst

²⁶⁸ Marcello Carmagnani writes, "En efecto, la reapropiación de los derechos sobre el territorio significó para la sociedad india recobrar todos los derechos sobre los recursos que permitirían reproducir la comunidad en el futuro." *El regreso de los dioses: El proceso de reconstitución de la identidad étnica en Oaxaca, siglos xvii y xviii* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988): 91.

²⁶⁹ E.P. Thompson. *Customs in Common*, 226.

²⁷⁰ AMS, Presidencia Municipal (PM), c11, e27. Valdés and del Bosque. *Los tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 69-81.

Spaniards and Spaniards will not be allowed to take or buy land in a Tlaxcalan neighborhood.

That the distribution of land for settlement be distinct, one made for Tlaxcalans and another for the Chichimecas...so that for all time the lands, pastures, brushlands, rivers and salt mines, quarries, mills and any other type of land will be separate and that at no time will one Indian [group] be able to buy the other group's land... That land used for grazing cattle (*ganado mayor*) not be allotted within five *leguas* of a settlement...that said cattle does not enter an Indian settlement without the voluntary approval of Indians.

That the Tlaxcalan Indians and their descendants will not only be hidalgos, free of all forms of tribute payments, but will also enjoy all the freedom, exemptions, and privileges that are currently enjoyed and will be enjoyed by the city of Tlaxcala...and that the principal Indians of said city who left for these settlements (as well as their descendants) will be able to own and carry firearms and can ride on horseback...I order that all said Indians of the city of Tlaxcala who went to the Chichimeca regions, along with their descendants, will retain these hidalgo privileges in perpetuity.

...that neither Chichimecos or Spaniards be allowed to settle amongst them [Tlaxcalans] because this could only cause problems.²⁷¹

The 1781 document also claims to be a copy of a royal decree that spells out Tlaxcalan privileges. It is not from 1591, but it instead claims to be a copy of a 1629 record. The first two privileges are very similar to the ones from the 1720 case. It states:

That all Indians that were from the city and province of Tlaxcala and who left to settle amongst the Chichimecas will be, along with their descendants, hidalgos forever, free from all tribute payments, taxes, and personal service requirements...that they will not be sent to settle amongst the Spaniards.

²⁷¹ AMS, PM, c11, e27. Ibid., 69-81.

That land distributed for homesteads be separate and distinct between the Tlaxcalans and Chichimecas...in such manner that for all time and forever the said lands, pastures, wilds, rivers, salt mines and mills, as well as other types of Haciendas be demarcated so that at no time will one Indian [group] be able to buy lands or own land belonging to the other...

The question of the Chichimecas was also of prime importance to the San Esteban council. Spanish authorities wanted the Tlaxcalans to incorporate other indigenous groups, as this was a primary reason why they had initially been sent north. It is unclear if they simply did not want to share their resources with the Chichimecas and other indigenous groups or if they did not have enough land and resources to share.²⁷² In a 1768 legal case brought against San Esteban by Saltillo, the Saltillo town council also addresses this issue. They state:

It is also evident that...that three parts of the water from the well used by this Villa was not only designated for use by the Pueblo de Tlaxcaltecas, as they so choose to believe, but it is also intended for use by other pueblos of Guachichil Indians and other nations from the region. It is also evident that the land that the designated land is only to be theirs for a time and is only to be under their jurisdiction (...it is not intended to be property, as they so believe either because of ignorance or malice...)²⁷³

The document continues to list the other rights issued by the Crown. Most of them dealt with land and issues concerning municipal jurisdiction. They write,

²⁷² Kevin Terraciano and Lisa Sousa discuss a somewhat similar case of ethnic discord. They note, "Like the Nahuatl title don Diego's story attempts to portray an early-colonial consensus among the Mixtecs and Spaniards. The Nahuas are conspicuously absent, undermining their claim of rescuing the Zapotecs from the Mixtecs. On the contrary, the Nahuas appear as uninvited meddlers who disturbed a peaceful status quo." "The 'Original Conquest' of Oaxaca," 53.

²⁷³ AMS, PM, c1, e3. Valdés and del Bosque, *Los tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 14.

That land allotments for cattle (*ganado mayor*) will be at least five *leguas* from a settlement.

That cattle are not allowed to graze in 'tierras de Pan' belonging to the aforementioned settlement without the permission of the Indians and their descendants.

That the lands and farms given to the Tlaxcalans and intended for individuals- and which are designated for their convenience- not be taken away if they are not being occupied.

That the allocations made to said settlements be free of taxes

That the Tlaxcalan Indians and their descendants will not only be *hidalgos* free of all tribute payments, but will enjoy all the freedoms, exemptions and privileges that are currently enjoyed and will be enjoyed by the said city of Tlaxcala and which were given by the Kings of Castille, my progeny and successors.

That the principal Indians of said city who left for the settlements, as well as their descendants, can own and carry firearms and ride on horseback...and in their journey they will be given the necessary supplies and clothes for a period of two years, and they will also be given aid when initially sowing their lands.

That they be given a letter and royal decree ordering that these edicts be followed...²⁷⁴

All three documents (1729, 1781, and 1809) discuss the special privileges that were allotted to the leading members of the Tlaxcalan community. Although the town council of San Esteban was supposed to represent all of its members, the council does distinguish between their role in their community and the status of the other citizens of San Esteban. One must therefore wonder if the council's primary interest was to protect their needs or those of the community at large.

Stephanie Wood found that titles served the interests of the *caciques* within the indigenous community, as they most often held the town's best lands.²⁷⁵ Perhaps the interests of the town became indistinguishable from those of the elites.²⁷⁶

The 1809 document once again expresses the Tlaxcalans' concern over issues of land ownership and water rights. It's worth discussing in greater detail, as it tells much about the Tlaxcalans and their expectations.

In Defense of Local Custom

On a variety of occasions colonial authorities would try to resolve conflicts between San Esteban and Saltillo by instructing them to follow local custom or by instructing them to do as was customarily done in the community in such events. Each community had their own version of custom and of local history. Consequently, these royal edicts did not stop local conflicts. In the 1729 and 1781 documents the San Esteban council indirectly spoke of the importance of customary practice by attempting to establish that their rights extended to the time when the town was originally founded. In the records presented for the 1809 dispute the San Esteban council is clearly trying to support much of their case by arguing that it was important that they abide by what they consider to be

²⁷⁴ AMS, PM, c33, e50. Zavala and Velázquez, *Temas del Virreinato*, 84-90.

²⁷⁵ Stephanie Wood, "The Cosmic Conquest: Late Colonial Views of the Sword and Cross in Central Mexican Títulos," *Ethnohistory* 38:2 (1991): 189; See also, Florescano, "El canon memorioso...", 210-203; Mary Elizabeth Smith, *Picture Writing from Ancient Southern Mexico. Mixtec Place Signs and Maps* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1923): 169.

²⁷⁶ David Frye, *Indians into Mexicans: History and Identity in a Mexican Town* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996): 76.

customary practice in the region. The problem therein lies in that San Esteban and Saltillo had different notions of what encompassed local custom. E.P.

Thompson notes that,

In the eighteenth century custom was the rhetoric of legitimation for almost any usage, practice, or demanded right. Hence uncodified custom- and even codified-was in continual flux. So far from having the steady permanence suggested by the word 'tradition', custom was a field of change and of contest, an arena in which opposing interests made conflicting claims.²⁷⁷

Indeed, the Spanish word *costumbre* (custom) and the word *moral* or *moralidad* (morality) are very interrelated. One definition of *moral* is the act of "conforming to good custom" (*conforme a buenas costumbres*). Although language is oftentimes redefined through time and by different communities, the San Esteban documents seem to record the Tlaxcalans' understanding of what was legitimate and illegitimate in their society.²⁷⁸

In this letter to Tlaxcala, as well as in other documents, the residents of San Esteban say that things "had always been done in this way" when they are fighting to defend their rights. Although a study of the recent history of San Esteban shows that Tlaxcalans fought to maintain their privileges they write that, "until this day they [local authorities] have supported our rights." Scholars note

²⁷⁷ E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crown in the Eighteenth Century," "In *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York: The New Press, 1993): 6.

²⁷⁸ Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," 188.

that peasant or "traditional" communities oftentimes defended themselves by adhering to custom. In effect E.P. Thompson notes that,

...plebian culture is rebellious, but rebellious in defense of custom. The customs defended are the people's own, and some of them are in fact based upon rather recent assertions in practice. But when the people search for legitimations for protest, they often turn back to the paternalist regulations of a more authoritarian society, and select from among these those parts most calculated to defend their present interests...Nor is the social identity of many working people unambiguous. One can often detect within the same individual alternating identities, one deferential, the other rebellious.²⁷⁹

Although indigenous peoples oftentimes innovated, their negation of change is perhaps one of the few safe ways they could defend it. Innovation becomes much safer when you hide behind the curtain of tradition. How else could peasants justify their actions, but through the defense of custom?

Tlaxcalans also appeared to believe that rights given to central Tlaxcalans or to them at any time would be valid for all times. In a 1781 letter to their parent colony the residents of San Esteban write,

...it appears most beneficial to recount to your greatness all that is happening to us, so that seeing us as your sons you will dignify us by favoring us, and sheltering us, by providing us with royal edicts that speak in our favor, as our ancestors have formerly favored us by presenting us with royal provisions that we have in our archive...in the year 1629, on the 10th of June, being governor of said city, Don Gregorio Nacienceno, and other judges and administrators, they included the information of the señores of the city for Don Juan Bautista de Salazar and Don Pedro Altamirano; and Don Juan Hernández, heads of the *cabeceras* of Tizatlán, and

²⁷⁹ Ibid, 9-10.

of Tepectipac in before Don Pedro de la Gasca, the public scribe, the same information that said city asked for at the time that the 400 families left so that they would guarantee us our agreements and until now they have preserved our privileges, exemptions, and liberties that that city [Tlaxcala] enjoys and will enjoy. That they will in no time be able to impede or take away anything...²⁸⁰

Eric Van Young proposes that, "time immemorial...turned out very often to have been measured by local political events, and the latter anchored in the domination of a communal political space legitimated in the sacral order."²⁸¹ Hence, there is also a political dimension to the struggle over who would be able to define custom or the "traditional."²⁸²

Although Tlaxcalans were being asked to forego more land, resources and personal rights at the end of the colonial period, there is scant evidence that they rioted or otherwise used violent means to support their claims. In effect, they

²⁸⁰ "...pues nos ha parecido por conveniente de participar a la Grandeza de Uds. todo lo que pasamos, para que mirándonos como a sus hijos, se dignen de favorecernos, y ampararnos con algunos Reales Cédulas, que hablaren a nuestro favor, como se dignaron, nuestros antecesores de intimarnos una Real Provisión que tenemos en nuestro archivo; como es constante, en el año de mil seiscientos y veinte y nueve, a los diez y nueve días del mes de Junio, siendo Gobernador de la Dcha. Ciudad don Gregorio Nacienceno, demás Jueces y Regimiento, inserto las informaciones de los señores de la Ciudad a Don Juan Bautista de Salazar; y Don Pedro Altamirano; y Don Juan Hernández, principales de las cabeceras de Tizatlán, y de Tepectipac, ante Don Pedro de la Gasca, escribano público, la misma que pidió la (?) expresada ciudad en el tiempo que salieron las cuatrocientas familias, para que nos guardasen las Capitulaciones, como convenga, en lo cual hasta la presente nos han guardado los privilegios, exenciones, libertades, que la esa Ciudad goze, y en adelante gozara. Sin que en ningún tiempo nos puedan impedir, o quitar, cosa alguna,..." *Colección de documentos para la historia de Tlaxcala*, 193-199.

²⁸¹ Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press): 486-487..

²⁸² Eric Hobsbawm writes, "Students of peasant movements know that a village's claim to some common land or right 'by custom from time immemorial' often expresses not a historical fact, but the balance of forces in the constant struggle of village against lords or against other villages." Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983): 2.

attempted to defend their rights in other ways. One such way was by establishing that previous custom supported their actions. In effect, "customs may provide a context in which people may do things it would be more difficult to do directly...they may keep the need for collective action,...and collective expressions of feelings and emotions within the terrain and domain of the coparticipants in a custom..."²⁸³

For instance, the 1809 case includes documents from 1607, 1631, 1651, 1653, and 1691. The Tlaxcalan council presented these documents in an attempt to establish how custom had been followed throughout the seventeenth century. The 1607 edict is one issued by Captain Francisco de Urdiñola who discusses transgression committed by the Saltillo town council against the residents of San Esteban. Urdiñola ultimately ordered that the residents of Saltillo should not let grazing animals enter Tlaxcalan areas.

The following document is from 1609 and it is issued by Don Hipolito de Velasco, Marques de Salinas, who was the governor and general captain of Nueva Vizcaya at the time. In it the Marques discusses how the Tlaxcalans appeared before him and issued a petition against the town of Saltillo, but also against an individual landowner, Pedro de Vega. In this decree the governor states,

...I give license to any one of the Indians who finds a beast or oxen or any other such cattle in their farm or orchard can enclose the animal and then they should inform the alcalde mayor of the Villa

²⁸³ Gerald M. Sider. *Culture and Class in Anthropology and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986): 940.

and notice of the damage that they caused...and the owner of such animal shall pay a fine of 200 pesos...²⁸⁴

In the documentation from 1631 don Bartolome Salbago de Aumada, the current lieutenant governor and general captain of Nueva Vizcaya, notes that fray Juan Manuel, the attorney general from Zacatecas, came before him to discuss how the Tlaxcalans were being harassed by the town of Saltillo. The Villa did not want to allow the residents of San Esteban to cut firewood or use of their allotted water rights. In a copy of a 1607 edict presumably issued by Captain Francisco de Urdiñola he states, "I order that no person shall be allowed to enter or take any lands or water that belong to said Indians and have belonged to them since the town was founded."²⁸⁵ It begins,

The licenciado don Bartolome Salbago de Aumada, lieutenant governor and general captain of this kingdom of Nueva Vizcaya, appointed by Your Majesty, make it known to the justices of Santiago del Saltillo as was done on the fifth day of this present month of July because of a petition that was presented to me by father Juan Manuel, the attorney general of the Province of San Francisco de Zacatecas, informed me that the Indians native to the Pueblo of Tlaxcala, near the Villa de Santiago del Saltillo, that they are being notably bothered by the alcaldes mayores of said Villa and in different occasions and times they took away and

²⁸⁴ "...doy licencia a qualquiera de los yndios de el que en su milpa sementera o huerta o de otro qualquiera se hallare bestia buey e otro qualquiera ganado mayor o menor para que la pueda encerrar y poner arcaudo y luego acudir a dar aviso a el alcalde mayor de esta villa y noticia del daño que huvieren echo a quien mande y haga tasar por personas desinteresadas y lo que assi tasaren con pena por todo vigor de derecho al dueño cuyo pareciere ser de ganado o bestia que huviere el dicho daño a que lo pague so pena de doscientos pesos para la rial camara y gastos de justicia..." AMS, PM, c1, e7, 16f. Valdés and del Bosque, *Los tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 288.

²⁸⁵ "Y por my visto le mande dar este por el qual os mando que no permitais que ninguna persona de ninguna calidad se les entre ni tome ningunas tierras ni aguas de los que los dichos yndios tienen y han tenido egosado en qualquier tiempo despues que el dicho su pueblo se fundó..." AMS, PM, c1, e7, 16f. Ibid, 287.

water rights that were given to them when the Pueblo was founded and they want to stop them from cutting firewood from the wilds of said Villa, which has harmed them notably, and in this way they are bothered by farmers from said Villa who take away their mules and horses and abuse said Indians because they claim that they damage their farmlands...they asked and pleaded that I issue an order so than no judge will innovate in any matter that has taken place since its original settlement until today, nor are they to take away their water rights nor should they impede them from entering the wilds to cut firewood and if they are farmers and they find animals belonging to said Indians they should bring said animal to the Villa and they shall be paid for their damages thus imposing some monetary penalties...²⁸⁶

Pedro de Vega, was singled out, as he was supposed to give the Tlaxcalans ten days of water use, as this had been established by a previous legal dispute that he lost. The de Aumada edict reads:

The lieutenant governor and general captain issues an order so that the justices of the Villa del Saltillo make said people give and themselves give said Indians the water that is customarily given to them and that this should be followed without innovating from custom, as it has protected said Indians punishing those who act against custom that conforms to justice (or the law)...²⁸⁷

Later, this same edict seems to be reworded, but this time it makes a point of stating that the governor does not want to impose on the rights of the residents of Saltillo. It reads,

²⁸⁶ AMS, PM, c1, e7, 16f. Ibid, 290-291.

²⁸⁷ "El señor theniente de governador y capitan general mando que se de mandamiento para que la justicia de la villa del Saltillo hagan dar y den los dichos yndios el agua que se les a acostumbrado a dar lo qual se guarde y cumpla sin ynobar en la costumbre que en el se a tenido amparando en ella a los dichos yndios castigando al que fuere contra la dicha costumbre conforme a derecho lo qual se siga sin perjuicio del que tubiere mejor derecho y assi lo proveyo y firmó. El licenciado Don Bartolome de Salbago de Aumado..." AMS, PM, c1, e7. Ibid, 292.

The lieutenant governor and general captain having seen the order included in this petition issued by the Marques de Guadalcazar, former Viceroy of New Spain, order that, without prejudicing the rights of the Villa de Santiago del Saltillo and those of their *alcaldes mayores*, have practices customary until today and so said order orders that this should be followed until it is determined who is right...²⁸⁸

Perhaps the Tlaxcalan council decided to include this passage so as not to further provoke the Saltillo council.

The 1691 document is said to be a decree from the president of the *Real Audiencia* and royal governor of Nueva Vizcaya, Don Gaspar de Sandoval Zerda Silva y Mendoza. Having reviewed the Tlaxcalan's petition he supports their assertion that they should be given special privileges and should be excused from continuously helping nearby areas, like Nuevo León, Parras, Coahuila, and Texas. The edict asserts that the Tlaxcalans had always helped northern areas at their own cost and had not been paid the same amount as the Spaniards involved in such endeavors. They argued that those who should first be asked to help should be from the nearest parishes and that this request should not harm such towns economically. The Tlaxcalans had helped with the conquest of this empire and established the town of San Esteban. Consequently, such demands should not be placed on them. Finally, the Tlaxcalans should be compensated just like the Spanish as they "incur the same costs when purchasing firearms and horses and when they send men to help out they are not able to attend to their fields and are

²⁸⁸ AMS, PM, c1, e7. *Ibid.*, 293.

thus left without the means to support their families."²⁸⁹ He concludes by stating that,

...the natives' (*naturales*) claims are reduced to two points, the first is that the justices of the Villa de Saltillo should not have authority over them, the second, addresses their present poverty and diminution and for which they have come so that some relief is provided, and so I state that the privileges that correspond to them, as they are settlers and conquerors, should be protected so that their population is maintained, and so that they are able to survive and thrive as this is of great benefit to the country's defense...²⁹⁰

Conclusion

The San Esteban edicts that were used to substantiate land ownership were a clear expression of the community's historical consciousness and of local culture. In addition, although indigenous title documents vary widely, one of the unifying aspects of these documents is their focus on defending their land. This struggle became an integral part of an indigenous pueblo's identity.²⁹¹ The defense of the community or *altepetl* probably dated back to pre-Columbian times, yet this identity was continually ingrained as population and social changes during the colonial period increasingly threatened the group's landholdings. In

²⁸⁹ "...no solo por ser yndios dejan de tener el mismo gasto de armas y caballos y perden las conveniencias asistir en sus siembras y exercicios y han de dexar con que mantener sus familias." Ibid, 295.

²⁹⁰ "...a dos puntos se reduce la pretencion de estos naturales el primero a que las justicias de la villa del Saltillo no tengan autoridad sobre ellos, el segundo a que atenta su presente pobreza y disminucion a que han benido se les releve de algunos socorros y se les guarden como a conquistadores y pobladores los privilegios que les corresponden y que para todo se les libre despacho con penas para el cumplimiento y como quiera que el mantener la poblason de los suplicantes y procurar su conservacion y aumento conviene mucho para la defenza de el paiz y de la cordillera y paraje..." AMS, PM, c1, e7, 16f. Ibid, 296.

effect, the unexpected consequence of Spanish insistence on written documentation to support land claims was that we now have a written record of a process that for the most part took place in oral form. Although the history that the residents of San Esteban tell in the documents is presented in legal disputes is tailored for their audience (Spanish officials), you cannot recount (or create) what is not part of your cultural consciousness. These stories are told because they are integral for community cohesion. It was the town elders who served in the San Esteban *cabildo* and consequently they had a vested interest in passing on the town's history. In effect, other codices, like the *Títulos Nahuas* or the *Códices Techioaloyan*, are written in popular Nahuatl and this would seem to indicate indigenous *cabildos* were conscious of the fact that they had a dual audience-Spanish authorities and their own community.²⁹² Although the San Esteban documents were recorded in Spanish, the existence of common historical themes (from documents dating from 1729-1809) does indicate that these stories were passed down from one generation to the next. By recounting and retelling their town's history indigenous communities forged and maintained the group's identity.

²⁹¹ Florescano, "El canon memorioso"; Lockhart, "Visions of Municipal Glory Undimmed"; Frye, *From Indians into Mexicans*.

²⁹² Florescano, "El canon memorioso," 196-197.

CHAPTER 5

Race, Class, and Gender

The study of history is the study of another culture. So it is that the study of race and race relations in past times is complicated by our own present-day ideas concerning race. As other elusive concepts, like the study of gender and class, race is a difficult topic to fully comprehend because by and large everyone (each social or ethnic group) defines it differently. This is further complicated by the fact that language is constantly changing and developing. In colonial Latin America words like *morisco* or *coyote* may have been used with great frequency in one generation, but later were dropped from the vocabulary entirely or were given different meanings. When census officials wrote the instructions for the 1777 Saltillo census, they advised the interviewer that he should record each person's *clase*, *estado* and *casta* (class, estate and caste). One could perhaps assume that class would be correlated with a person's occupation, but it clearly also denoted a person's wealth or even racial status.²⁹³ Estate (or condition/status) seemed to be a term interchangeable with the word *calidad*, or a person's race. By extension, *castas* were mixed groups (whether *mestizo*, *castizo*, *mulatto*...).

The statistical evidence for the township of Saltillo suggests that this was a society that was becoming more racially mixed, but where there was barely any

²⁹³ Robert McCaa, "Calidad, Clase, and Marriage in Colonial Mexico: The Case of Parral, 1788-90," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 64:3 (1984): 478.

upward social movement for non-Spanish groups. Whiteness may not have guaranteed success, but it did make it more of a possibility. *Casta* groups could at times move up occupationally, but they could not achieve the status of a Creole or a Peninsular Spaniard. Consequently, "whitening," or proving ones *limpieza de sangre* and attempting to "pass," became one of the only ways an individual could hope to move up socially in this regional enclave. The language of race may have been laced with class overtones, but however subtly (whether one spoke of a person's legitimacy, honor, occupation...) all of these factors spoke to the continuing importance of whiteness. Consequently, the ideas discussed in this chapter are a necessary prelude for understanding Tlaxcalan identity formation (which will be discussed in the following chapter).

The primary sources used in this chapter will be the 1777 and 1793 census, as well as birth, marriage, and burial records from the town of Saltillo for the period spanning 1760-1821. Although we can learn much about local society through an analysis of statistical sources, they are wrought with inconsistencies and consequently create a whole new set of problems for historians. Indeed, the entries for the 1777 and 1793 census are oftentimes incomplete. In these records a person's occupation regularly goes unlisted, as well as their racial status (especially for women and children). One might expect that parish birth, marriage, and burial records would be more accurate, but these documents are only as reliable as the person recording the information. Parish priests or visiting clerics each had different methods of recording data. The burial records appear to be especially problematic, as the number of parishoners who paid for a burial

ceremony varied greatly from year to year. For instance, in 1774 there were 159 total people buried, in 1780 there were 473, in 1790 there were 179, and finally in 1800 there were 210. Despite the inherent problems in these types of colonial documents, they still provide one of the best ways to understand broader population changes and perhaps also ideological changes regarding race. The document itself presents invaluable information about the social changes that were taking place in Spanish America as a whole during the eighteenth century and that consequently were manifested at the local level in these northern communities.²⁹⁴

Census Data

Along with the rest of New Spain, northern enclaves experienced population growth at the end of the colonial period.²⁹⁵ Although statistical information about these towns varies, sometimes dramatically depending on the source, most agree that there was a notable increase in the population of the region of Coahuila during the early nineteenth century. Peter Gerhard writes that Coahuila's population was made up of 42,937 inhabitants in 1810. He points out

²⁹⁴ Elizabeth Kuznesof writes, "Recent literary studies of colonial Latin American argue that colonial texts represent 'colonial discourses' rather than objective descriptions of fact. While this methodology has been applied to histories, long essays, plays and (interestingly), to maps, it could also profitably be used for a more penetrating study of laws, censuses, and parish records, among other documentary 'texts'." "Race, Class, and Gender: A Conversation," *Colonial Latin American Review* 4:1 (1995): 162.

²⁹⁵ By 1742 New Spain's population was estimated to be 3.3 million and by 1810 it had grown to 6 million. David Brading and Celia Wu. "Population Growth and Crisis: León, 1720-1860," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 5:1 (1973): 1. Silvia Arrom as well as other authors, like Robert McCaa, have noted the gender imbalance in colonial Mexico. Silvia Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City, 1790-1857* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983); Robert McCaa, "La viuda viva del México Borbónico: sus voces, variedades y vejaciones," In *Familias Novohispanas, Siglos XVI al XIX*. Edited by Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuro (México: El Colegio de México, 1991).

that the region that included Parras and Saltillo (southern part of the province) comprised 23,000 of these settlers. Of the remaining 19,937, 7,311 were Spanish, 4,712 were *castas*, and 7,911 were Indians.²⁹⁶ In Miguel Ramos Arizpe's report on the northern provinces, the population of Coahuila is made up of 60,000 people.²⁹⁷

Available statistical data also indicates that population growth was taking place in the Villa of Saltillo. In the 1777 census, for example, the population of Saltillo is 3,175 (these numbers do not include the surrounding communities living in haciendas or ranches) and by 1793 it is 6,082.²⁹⁸ Although one could rightly question the reliability of colonial *padrones* if these numbers are compared to other census taken soon after independence these general trends do seem to bear out.²⁹⁹ In fact, Saltillo seems to be experiencing dramatic growth. In the 1829 census its population is now 19,047 and in 1830 it has a population of 20,241.

A racial breakdown of the town indicates that Spaniards were the predominant group in Saltillo. The following tables present a racial breakdown of the population as presented in the 1777 and the 1793 Saltillo census.

²⁹⁶ Peter Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain*, revised edition. (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma, 1993).

²⁹⁷ Ramos Arizpe, Miguel. "Memoria presentada a las Cortes por D. Miguel Ramos Arizpe, diputado por Coahuila, sobre la situación de las Provincias Internas de Oriente en la sesión de las Provincias Internas de Oriente en la sesión del día 7 de noviembre de 1811," In *Descripciones económicas regionales de Nueva España, provincias del norte, 1790-1814*. Enrique Florescano and Isabel Gil Sánchez, coord. (México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1976): 152-200.

²⁹⁸ Leslie Offutt points out that these numbers appear to be inflated.

²⁹⁹ David Brading and Celia Wu note that census statistics and parish registers are especially unreliable for the colonial period, but they find statistical records for the period after independence to somewhat more accurate. "Population Growth and Crisis."

Table 1: Racial Designation in the Villa of Saltillo, 1777 Census

	Male	Female	Total
Unidentified	592	852	1444
Spanish	508	553	1061
Mulatto	117	128	245
Indian	79	117	196
Coyote	81	81	162
Black	1	14	15
Mestizo	8	11	19
Lobo	4	7	11
Morisco	1	7	8
Apache	2		2
Slave		2	47
Castiso	1		1
Total			

Table 2: Racial Designation in the Villa of Saltillo, 1793 Census³⁰⁰

Spanish	2,104
Coyote	392
Mulatto	313
Mestizo	168
Other Castas	14
Unidentified	2,578
Total	5,569

In 1777, those identified as Spanish comprised 45.5% of the population of Saltillo. The large number of people whose race went unidentified can be partially explained by the fact that the race of women and children oftentimes went unlisted. Robert McCaa also finds this to be the case in Parral. He notes that adult women lacked a racial label 15% of the time, as opposed to men who were unidentified only 7% of the time.³⁰¹ In Saltillo, females (regardless of age) were not given a racial label 27% of the time and males 19% of the time. A more

³⁰⁰ Leslie Offutt breaks these numbers up into rural and urban districts. AMS, PM, C43, 1791.

³⁰¹ Robert McCaa, "Calidad, Clase, and Marriage in Colonial Mexico: The Case of Parral, 1788-1790," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 64(1984): 481.

telling statistic is that in 151 instances the wife's race is unrecorded, as opposed to 25 occasions for male spouses. There seems to be a conscious effort not to identify the wife's race, especially when she was married to a Spaniard.³⁰² As we will see, this was perhaps because women were said to assume the race of their husband when they married, so the census taker did not think it was important to reiterate what was already socially understood. One would also have to wonder if they were reluctant to list women's race because it was not "equal" to that of her husband's. Official recording of this information would have been a way to recognize interracial marriages. As Joan Scott notes, "Statistical reports are neither totally neutral collections of fact nor simply ideological impositions. Rather they are ways of establishing the authority of certain visions of social order, of organizing perceptions of 'experience.'" In many ways census officials had the "power to define reality."³⁰³

Saltillo also appeared to have racially divided neighborhoods. The 1777 Saltillo census is divided by neighborhoods and then by households. There were 561 households, including those residents referred to as *extramuros*, who were those living in the outskirts of the city. Although many of the neighborhoods are racially mixed, certain barrios have a larger percentage of Spanish (Creole and Peninsular) residents than others. Although I was unable

³⁰² Elizabeth Kuznesof argues that women "absorbed" the race and "other characteristics of men they married." "Race, Class, and Gender: A Conversation," 162.

³⁰³ Joan Scott, "A Statistical Representation of Work," in *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988): 115. On analyzing statistics, see Michel de Certeau, "'History: Science and Fiction,'" in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*. Translated by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

to do a specific count of those belonging to Saltillo's neighborhoods in the 1777 census because it was unclear where the first two neighborhoods of Los Guisaches and San Francisco began and ended. Leslie Offutt was able to break these numbers down using the 1793 census.³⁰⁴ (see Table 3)

Table 3: Racial Breakdown of Saltillo Neighborhoods, 1793

	Spanish	Coyote	Mestizo	Mulatto	Black	Indian	Total
Calle de los Guisaches	62 62.6%	0	27 27%	3 3%	0	7 7%	99
Calle de San Francisco	258 (55.8%)	66 (14.3%)	15 (3.2%)	51 (11%)	2 (.4%)	70 (15.2%)	462
Calle de Santiago	369 (74.8%)	37 (7.5%)	5 (1%)	21 (4.3%)	0	61 (12.4%)	493
Barrio de Guanajuato	26 (54.7%)	106 (22.2%)	52 (1%)	75 (15.7%)	0	30 (6.3%)	477

Even though those classified as Spaniards dominated Saltillo's population, they tended to cluster in certain areas of the city. The area around the Calle de los Guisaches is predominantly Spanish and the second most numerous group in that neighborhood are Mestizos. The homes along the Calle de Santiago are also predominantly Spanish. The other two areas seem to be more racially mixed, although they are still predominantly Spanish. This is not surprising, given that Spaniards were the most numerous. The central areas of the city appear to be reserved for upper class Spaniards and the outlying regions, along the Barrio of Guanajuato, were areas reserved for lower class Spaniards, castas, Indians and blacks. Indeed, in the 1777 census officials gave no one along these outlying areas "Don" status.

³⁰⁴ Leslie Offutt

Race and Class

How was class defined in colonial times? There is extensive debate surrounding this issue. Patricia Seed argues that class became much more important in the waning years of the eighteenth century, but that colonials did not have the language to speak of these types of inequities and consequently they continued to use the language of race to describe class status.³⁰⁵ Silvia Arrom suggests that because people changed their race as they moved up socially census information would also indicate a person's class.³⁰⁶ Rodney Anderson contends that census takers left clues to a person's class or social status by preceding certain individual's names with a "Don" or "Doña."³⁰⁷ Because the 1777 Saltillo census, like other colonial *padrones*, oftentimes does not list a person's occupation we can only speculate about how a person's class was determined. An analysis of who was given "Don" status in Saltillo indicates that both race and a person's occupation helped determine a person's status.

The manner in which the 1777 census itself is organized illustrates Saltillo's social and racial hierarchy. The very first census entry reads:

Don Joseph Rodrigo de Abrego, distinguished person, both because of his *calidad* and because of his occupation, who is married with Doña María de Uro y Campa, said Señor is forty-six years old and his wife is thirty-six years old. He owns haciendas; his family is comprised of four daughters,

³⁰⁵ Patricia Seed. *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico: Conflicts Over Marriage Choice, 1574-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988): 222.

³⁰⁶ Silvia M. Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983): 104-105.

³⁰⁷ Rodney D. Anderson, "Race and Social Stratification: A Comparison of Working-Class Spaniards, Indians, and Castas in Guadalajara, Mexico in 1821," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 68:2 (1988): 216.

who are fourteen years old, twelve, five and the other one is four. Servants: one a Black slave who is thirty-four, two female slaves who are single, one is fifty and the other one is twenty-five, one Indian who is thirty and single and has one fifteen year old daughter, the other servant of the same *calidad* is twenty-two and is also single, one mulatto who is four years old and is the son of one of the slaves[;] above María de Arispe, 30, Spanish widow of Antonio Guaxardo, with one nine year old daughter and a boy who is ten years old named José de Jesus, a Spanish orphan.

Joseph Rodrigo was a prominent citizen of the Villa and consequently we know much more about him than other members of this society, many of which were not included in this count; those living on the outskirts of the city, the poor, and Indians. This apparently simple entry gives us important information about this household and consequently about the social order. The census taker writes that Joseph Rodrigo, a Spaniard, is distinguished both because of his race (*calidad*) and because of his occupation. He is a large landowner, has a Spanish wife, a growing family, and an extensive number of servants (most in this relatively urban community did not have these many employees living under their roof). He owns slaves (three women, one of which has a son), which is also rare in late colonial Saltillo. In the 1777 census there were only forty-seven people listed as a mulatto or black slave. According to late colonial standards of status he is truly a person who deserves the designation of "Don."

In contrast, Xavier Ramos is not called a "Don." His family's entry reads:

House and family of Xavier Ramos, *coyote* carpenter who is sixty years old and married to Gertrudis, who is Spanish and is forty years old. They have two children, one named Juan José and is thirty years old, and is married to Xaviera Morales, who is Spanish and is twenty-five years old. They have a two-year old daughter named Ygnacia Blas. They

also have a mestiza servant named Juana Muñoz who is twenty years old.

Interestingly, Xavier Ramos appears to possess many of the qualities that should elevate a person's status in the colonial world. He was an older male who was married to a Spanish woman. They had two children and a servant. Two factors apparently did not work in his favor. First, he himself was not Spanish- he was a *coyote*- and he was a carpenter. Which of the final two factors most affected his social standing?

Scholars have previously noted that there is an association between race and the division of labor. The Saltillo census would support this assessment. The following table breaks down occupations by race.

Table 4: Distribution of Occupations by Race, 1777

Occupation	Peninsular	Creole	castizo ³⁰⁸	mestizo	coyote	mulatto	Black	lobo	Indian
Agriculturer		6							1
Barber		1							
Blacksmith		6			1				
Bricklayer		1							
Butcher						1			
Cashier	7								
Candlemaker		1							
Carpenter		8	1	1	1	2			
Cook						1			2
Farm laborer		9							
Government post	4								
Jatero				1					
Javonero		1							
Leather tanner					1	1			1
Mason		1							
Merchant	5								
Milk mother						1			
Mozo									2
Muleteer		2				1			
Notary		1							
Obrajero		6			1	3			
Obrero		1							1
Organista									1
Scribe		1							
Servant		19		2	14	24	19	4	58
Shoemaker		6				2			3
Shepherd				1					
Silversmith		4							
Slave							47		
Surgeon		1							
Tailor	2	5							
Watchman		1							

³⁰⁸ Patricia Seed notes that in the seventeenth century the terms *castizo* and *morisco* began to appear with greater frequency. Castizos referred to light-skinned *mestizos* and *moriscos* were light-skinned mulattos. "Social Dimensions of Race: Mexico City, 1753," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 62:4 (1982): 573.

As in other areas of New Spain, *peninsulares* dominated the merchant class and government posts.³⁰⁹ Another profession where Spaniards predominated was that of *cajeros* or cashiers. This seemed to be a post that served as a stepping stone for more prominent employment, as most of those who occupied this job were young Spanish men. Their ages ranged from 19 to 31. Silversmiths and tailors were also occupations that were dominated by Creoles and Peninsulares in 1777. In fact, there were no other groups that had these professions. In the 1793 census other *castas* had made some headway, as there were now two *coyotes* who were tailors, as well as one mulatto and one Indian. In 1793 there were three silversmiths, but they all continued to be Spaniards (see Appendix). There appeared to be little change in the social hierarchy between 1777 and 1793. Creoles were large landowners, but they were not limited to these types of positions. They also had a variety of skilled and unskilled jobs, and were listed as bricklayers, carpenters, shoemakers and even as servants (the table includes both male and female workers). Those who served as household servants were primarily Indians, mulattos and blacks, but there were also a fair number of Creoles and *coyotes* that undertook this type of low status work. In her analysis of the 1753 Mexico City census Patricia Seed found that about 50% of mulattoes were servants and that 81.5% of blacks were also servants.³¹⁰ She

³⁰⁹ See Magnus Mörner. *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America* (Boston, 1967): 61; David A. Brading. *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico, 1763-1810* (Cambridge, 1971): 258; Patricia Seed, "Social Dimensions of Race," 577.

³¹⁰ Seed, "Social Dimensions of Race," 582.

argues that they they followed the path previously established by their parents. Mulattoes in Saltillo also follow the occupational status of their "parent" population, as there were many mulatto servants (only Indians were listed as servants with greater frequency). There were relatively few castas whose occupational status was even recorded, but most people's occupations went unidentified or they were listed as not having a profession. ("sin oficio"). Of the forty-nine males who were *sin oficio*, 18 were Spaniards (Creole), 15 were mulattos, 13 were *coyotes* and 3 were Indians.

If we analyze the male household heads and separate those who were given "Don" status and from those who were not, this breakdown would seem to indicate that both race and occupation affected a person's status, but that race (however it was defined) mattered more. Although age and marital standing mattered (there was only one single "Don" a creole, and the average age of "Dons" was 38), race does seem to weigh heavily in determining who had a higher social standing in Saltillo. As the following table shows, there were no non-Spanish male household heads (with a specified occupation) that were given "Don" status by the census takers.

Table 5: Male Heads of Households (whose occupation was specified) given "Don" Status; Avg. age of subjects: 38

Race	Occupation	Marital Status	Age
Peninsular	Alcalde ord. mayor	widow	46
Peninsular	Alguacil mayor	married	37
Creole	Attorney general	married	48
Creole	blacksmith	married	27
Creole	brickmason	married	54
Creole	<i>Capitán protector</i>	married	60
Peninsular	<i>Capitán Protector</i>	married	38
Creole	carpenter	married	30
Creole	carpenter	married	35
Creole	carpenter	married	55
Creole	carpenter	married	73
Creole	<i>jabonero</i> ³¹¹	married	40
Creole	<i>labrador</i> ³¹²	married	27
Creole	<i>labrador</i>	married	38
Creole	<i>labrador</i>	married	40
Creole	<i>labrador</i>	married	40
Creole	<i>labrador</i>	married	49
Creole	<i>labrador</i>	married	50
Creole	<i>labrador</i>	married	57
Creole	<i>labrador</i>	widow	57
Creole	<i>labrador</i>	married	60
Creole	<i>labrador</i>	widow	60
Peninsular	merchant	married	41
Peninsular	merchant	married	45
Peninsular	merchant	widow	46
Peninsular	merchant	married	53
Peninsular	merchant	widow	56
Creole	merchant	single	28
Creole	merchant	married	31

³¹¹ A *jabonero* is a soap maker.

³¹² A *labrador* is a farm laborer.

Table 5 (cont.)

Race	Occupation	Marital status	Age
Creole	merchant	married	41
Creole	merchant	married	43
Creole	merchant	married	46
Creole	merchant	widow	55
Creole	merchant	widow	57
Creole	muleteer	widow	60
Creole	notary	widow	57
Creole	rancher	married	55
Peninsular	sales tax administrator	married	49
Creole	scribe	married	53
Creole	shoemaker	married	23
Creole	silversmith	married	36
Creole	silversmith	married	42
Creole	silversmith	married	48
Creole	tailor	married	24
Creole	tailor	married	43
Creole	tailor	married	57
Creole	Teniente Alg. Mayor.		60
Creole	Teniente general	married	46

All of the household heads who were given "Don" status were Spanish. In late eighteenth century Saltillo race continued to be an important social marker that strongly shaped how one was viewed in society and that determined one's position in the colonial order. Yet, race was not the only factor that appeared to shape colonial society. If one looks at carpenters, for example, this society appears more complex. The following table denotes the race and occupation of those not given "Don" status. This information would seem to indicate that *castas* and other groups were able to find some social movement by having a skilled profession, and that race and occupational status were not the only factors that affected one's status in this society.

Table 6: Male Head of Households (whose occupation was specified) who were not given "Don" status

Race	Occupation	Marital status	Age
Creole	agriculture	married	50
Indian	agriculture	married	48
Creole	blacksmith	married	27
Creole	blacksmith	married	48
Creole	blacksmith	married	63
Creole	brickmason	married	47
Mulatto	butcher	married	47
Creole	candlemaker	married	44
Castiso	carpenter	married	50
Coyote	carpenter	married	60
Coyote	carpenter	married	60
Creole	carpenter	married	35
Creole	carpenter	married	39
Creole	carpenter	married	51
Mulatto	carpenter	married	48
Creole	hatmaker	married	21
Creole	hatmaker	married	68
Mulatto	jailer	married	50
Mestizo	"jatero"	married	30
Coyote	leather tanner	married	41
Indian	leather tanner	married	22
Creole	merchant	married	36
Creole	merchant	married	60
Mulatto	muleteer	married	68
Coyote	obrajero	married	28
Creole	obrajero	married	36
Creole	obrajero	married	39
Creole	obrajero	widow	39
Creole	obrajero	married	49
Creole	obrajero	married	50
Creole	obrajero	widow	60
Mulatto	obrajero	married	48
Indian	obrero	married	40
Indian	organista	married	34

Table 6 (cont.)

Race	Occupation	Marital status	Age
Mulatto	servant	married	38
Coyote	shepherd	married	40
Coyote	shepherd	married	40
Creole	shoemaker	married	35
Creole	shoemaker	married	38
Creole	shoemaker	married	50
Creole	shoemaker	married	51
Indian	shoemaker	married	38
Indian	shoemaker	married	44
Indian	shoemaker	married	54
Indian	shoemaker	married	54
Mulatto	shoemaker	married	22
Mulatto	shoemaker	married	38
Mulatto	shoemaker	married	39
Mulatto	slave	married	40
Indian	stewart	married	38
Creole	surgeon	married	42
Creole	tailor	married	34
Creole	tailor	married	48
Creole	tailor	married	50
Creole	tailor	married	54
Creole	watchman	married	60

Although carpentry was not a high status profession in other areas of colonial Mexico, Spaniards in Saltillo dominated this occupation. Creoles comprised 66% of all carpenters. Of twelve carpenters, eight were Creoles, there were two mulattos, one castizo, and one mestizo. Four of the Spanish carpenters were given "Don" status by census takers. None of the casta carpenters were given "Don" status. In fact, of the 114 male household heads whose occupation was listed, fifty-eight were given "Don" status and all of these were either Creole or Peninsular Spaniards. Is carpentry therefore a high status profession or were

there other factors that determined why some Spanish carpenters were "Dons" and others were not? Did race or class matter more? Why was the previously discussed Xavier Ramos not given "Don" status? He was also a carpenter (a skilled profession) and was married to a Spanish woman, had a son who was also married to a Spanish woman, and had a servant. Yet, Xavier Ramos himself was a coyote and may not have had the amount of wealth that would have elevated him in status. If he had more wealth, perhaps he would not even have appeared as a *coyote* in the census. His elite status could have helped make him a Spaniards. Race, class (and gender) were all factors that shaped a person's social standing. This is illustrated one in the burial records.

A count of burials from 1774 and 1810 (in approximate ten-year intervals) was conducted, yet the years of 1774 and 1780 were most useful because they not only denote a person's race, but also the type of funeral they chose. We cannot truly understand why a parishoner would request a "high" or a "low" funeral, but they do seem to be an indicator of social class. In his study of religion in eighteenth century Mexico Brian Larkin notes that Mexico City's elite used funeral processions as a way to flaunt their wealth or proclaim their social position.³¹³ Yet, all groups had the opportunity to request a "high" funeral.³¹⁴ That being the case, parishoners still needed to have enough money to pay for this final religious service. The following tables show a racial breakdown and type of funeral chosen by each parishoners for the years of 1774 and 1780. Most of those

³¹³ Brian Larkin, "Baroque and Reformed Catholicism: Religious and Cultural Change in Eighteenth Century Mexico," Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Texas-Austin (1999): 355.

³¹⁴ Funeral rights were either high or low, but could also be referred to as being buried with a high cross or low cross.

choosing a high burial in 1774 were Spaniards (80%) and a large percentage of those given a low burial were Indians (43%). Although this breakdown would seem to clearly illustrate Saltillo's racial hierarchy, it should be noted that the one slave listed in the records that year was given a high burial. Race, wealth, and status were clearly interrelated, but individuals were able to transgress these restrictions at times. Note that six mulattos were given a high burial that year and so were seven Indians.

Table 7: Saltillo Burials, 1774

Total: 159 Male: 84 Female: 75

	High		Low	
Spanish	66	80%	11	15%
Coyote	1	1.2%	18	24%
Mestizo	1	1.2%	4	5.3%
Mulatto	6	7.3%	9	12%
Indian	7	11.7%	32	43%
Slave	1	1.2%		
Unidentified			1	1.3%
Total	82		75	

The breakdown for 1780 once again shows a clear tendency for Spaniards to receive high burials and for subordinate groups to receive low burials. During this year there seems to be an even clearer division between the type of burial choice and race. Most receiving high burials were Spaniards (92%) and 62% of those given a low burial were Indians. Even though there were many more burials in 1780 (473, as opposed to 159 in 1774) only three mulattos received a high burial, as well as two Indians that year.

Table8: Saltillo Burials, 1780

Total: 473 Male: 242 Female: 231

	High		Low	
Spanish	157	92%	38	13.8%
Coyote	5	2.9%	25	9.0%
Mestizo	4	2.3%	18	6.5%
Mulatto	3	1.8%	23	8.4%
Indian	2	1.1%	171	62%
Total	171		275	

Were Spaniards the wealthiest members of society who controlled most of the wealth in the region and kept other groups from advancing or were some successful individuals able to "buy" their status as Spaniards? Burial records could support both these claims. One would of course need to cross-check birth and death records in order to fully understand if individuals were passing or if subordinate groups were locked out of certain professions and the opportunity to accumulate greater wealth because of their race. Previous analyses of race suggest that the disappearance of certain racial labels, such as the racial designation of mulatto, signified that those of mixed racial ancestry were able to become labeled as Spanish in late colonial Mexico.³¹⁵ Whether or not this was also the case in Saltillo is still unclear. Both of these analyses, one suggesting that Spaniards had even more control over resources and the suggestion that individuals were increasingly able to pass into Spanish society if they were able to

³¹⁵ Chance and Taylor, "Race and Class," 439; Valdes, "Decline of Castas," 29; Anderson, "Race and Social Stratification," 240-241.

accumulate enough wealth, point to the intrinsic racism evident in the late colonial world. "Passing" is a racist notion because it implies that one can only garner the full respect of one's peers if one is labeled as a Spaniard.

How did race and class intersect in late colonial Saltillo? One might surmise that market forces would have prompted the disappearance of ethnicity and replaced it was a class-consciousness. This is in fact what scholars like Steve Stern argued would take place.³¹⁶ Other historians have not ignored the fact that the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was a period of time when concepts of race, ethnicity, but also class were being reformulated and redefined because of economic changes and state mechanisms. Hence, Patricia Seed focuses more on language or the lack of a language to speak of class. In so doing, she implies that class overrides ethnicity as a force influencing social stratification at the end of the colonial period. She writes,

Colonial society's inability to express its growing cognizance of social disparity- specifically differences in economic and social status- resided in the fact that although money was becoming the central guarantor of social status, race rather than money was the dominant metaphor for social inequality...The disparities that aristocratic eighteenth century Mexican families were struggling to express were the inequalities of power, wealth, and prestige. But by the end of that century, there did not exist a word or a language to express these differences. The search for a language rooted in traditional historical distinctions was ultimately unsuccessful

³¹⁶ Steve Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest, Huamanga to 1640* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1982); Scholars have not ignored this apparent dichotomy. John Rex writes, "The paradox of the modernization and individualization of colonial and post-colonial society lies in the fact that though it is based upon universalistic notions, racial categorization may become more rather than less important within it." *Race and Ethnicity* (Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press, 1986): 56.

because the differences that society found significant were based on a new and entirely different economic and social order... For the late eighteenth century, however, the word 'class,' as a marker of distinctions of rank within society, did not exist. It would remain for the nineteenth century to create that meaning.³¹⁷

This implies that ethnicity in and of itself was not a distinct entity at this time.

Yet, indigenous people continued to speak of ethnicity and it shaped their political behavior. The existence of a class consciousness or of market forces does not mean that ethnicity became less of an influential concept in society. One cannot consider indigenous people's references to ethnic concerns a false consciousness for to do so would negate the importance of indigenous peoples' own perspectives.³¹⁸

Even though socio-economic differences became more noticeable in late colonial society, ethnicity continued to be the way in which indigenous groups perceived and spoke about inequality- how they saw their world. Yet, ethnicity was not a veneer on class dynamics. Groups may have lived in a more economically unequal world, but the language that they used to express their discontent did not speak to economic difference. Ethnicity still mattered. It was a construct that was manipulated by indigenous peoples to best serve their needs.

³¹⁷ Patricia Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico*, 222-223.

³¹⁸ In reference to indigenous rebellions and the peasant perspective, William Taylor writes, "In neither region [central Mexico and Oaxaca] did the villages' independent spirit and ideal of separatism reflect economic reality. This disjunction suggests an important distinction in colonial life between village culture and colonial society. In making this distinction, I am thinking of culture as the distinctive manner of life of a group of people based on a shared way of living and looking at the world, a world view based on group-learned definitions and interpretations of behavior." *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages*, 162,

The fact that class dynamics increasingly shaped society did not mean that culture and ethnicity were pushed into the background. It only meant that there was one more factor, one more pressure that indigenous people had to deal with. Market forces shaped every aspect of this society, including the development of ethnic identity, but it is still a force that must be analyzed in and of itself. Ethnicity thus continued to be a real construct within people's lives. This is evident by the fact that even today, when capitalist development has affected every corner of the world and aspect of our lives, ethnic groups continue to exist.

Gender and Race

Like other cities in New Spain, Saltillo shows a gender imbalance.³¹⁹ Of a total population of 3,175 in 1777, there were 1,784 women and 1,391 men. Of these 899 were listed as being married, 380 were single and 179 widowed. There were also 129 female-headed households. Widows primarily headed these households, but women whose husband's were absent or even single mothers were listed as household heads. On infrequent occasions a woman would be recorded as the head of the household even while her husband was still residing in the home. This was never the case in a Spanish household, but it did occur in *casta* families. This might have been because the woman was the primary breadwinner in those homes.

³¹⁹ See Arrom, *The Women of Mexico, 1790-1857*.

There were also more single (unmarried or widowed) Spanish women. Spanish women who were listed as single (*soltera*-over the age of 14) or widowed in 782 instances, but there were only 366 Spanish men who were single (unmarried male over the age of 16, the census only used the word *soltera* or *doncella* when referring to unmarried women). The marriage market for Spanish women appeared to be very restricted. As most in Spanish America married within their own racial group, Spanish women in Saltillo had very limited options if they wanted to marry within their own group. The following table breaks down the population of Saltillo by race and gender.

Table 9: Race and Gender of Saltillo Population, 1777

Female		Male	
Spanish	552	Spanish	507
Coyota	81	Coyote	81
Mestiza	11	Mestizo	7
Castiza	0	Castizo	1
Morisca	7	Morisco	1
Loba	7	Lobo	4
Mulatta	129	Mulatto	5
Black	14	Black	1
Apache	0	Apache	2
Indian	117	Indian	79
Unknown	851	Unknown	592

Although there appears to be about an equal number of Spanish men and women, many of those women remained unmarried (see table below). There was also a gender imbalance in the number of mulatta females and mulattos. Many mulatta women married outside of their group, as there were relatively few single mulattas of marriageable age.

Table 10: Female Headed Households in Saltillo, 1777

Total: 115

Spanish	Mestiza	Coyota	Mulatta	Indian
88 (76%)	1 (.8%)	15 (13%)	10 (8.7%)	1 (.8%)

Most of the Spanish women who headed households were in fact widows or were single (never married).³²⁰ A few of them did have husbands who were

³²⁰ Silvia Arrom notes that there were also an extensive number of Spanish women who remained single in nineteenth century Mexico City. She discusses a variety of factors for this, but suggests that it was because upper class Spanish women were not able to find equitable marriage partners. *The Women of Mexico City*.

absent at the time the census was taken. Casta women seemed to not remain unmarried for very long, so consequently few of these women were listed as household heads in the census. In one instance a coyota woman was listed as the household head, despite of the fact that her husband was living in the household. Her husband was Indian.

The colonial family unit was also much different than one might expect. Although many ascribed to the traditional nuclear family, the 1777 census also notes that there were forty-one adopted children. Of these forty-one, nine were living in female-headed households. Rita de los Santos Coy was a forty-eight year old Spanish widow who had three daughters, ages twenty-five, fourteen, and thirteen, but she also had a six-year old adopted son. Fifty-three year old María Anna de Almandos, also a Spanish widow, had a single adopted daughter of age twenty-five, a twenty-five year old female mulatta slave, a female Indian servant, age seventeen, and a nine year old male Indian servant.

Marriage Patterns

Magnus Mörner notes that the eighteenth century was a time of growing racial prejudice, but paradoxically it was also a time when there were an increasing number of interracial marriages. He points out that, "the reality was that it was the progress and expansion of intermediary groups that essentially motivated this ever growing exclusion of other groups by the Creole elite."³²¹

³²¹Magnus Mörner, *Estado, razas, y cambio social en Hispanoamérica colonial* (México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1974): 100.

Moreover, it should be noted that the popular classes did not blindly accept this growing racial prejudice. They often rejected racial ideologies in their daily lives.³²² These numbers therefore only provide a roadmap with which to understand this regional society. Lived experience was much more complex than what these statistics could possibly describe. Even so, this data indicates that most colonials married within their own racial or social group.³²³ Intermarriage amongst Spaniards in Saltillo was rare. Eighty-five percent of Spanish men married within their own race and Spanish women married within their own group 86.7% of the time. This was unlike the Bajío region where, because of a gender imbalance that plagued most of colonial Spanish America, Spanish women had an intermarriage rate of 29.6 percent.³²⁴

Table 11: Marital Status in Saltillo, 1777

Married	Single ³²⁵	Widow
899	380	179

³²² Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-1720* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1994).

³²³ Mörner, *Estado, razas, y cambio social*, 98.

³²⁴ D.A. Brading and Celia Wu, "Population Growth and Crisis: León, 1720-1860," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 5:1 (1973): 7.

³²⁵ A person was "single" if census taker listed them as such. Usually this designation was given to single females, who were either *doncellas* or *solteras*.

Table 12: Marriage Patterns in Saltillo, 1777

		Wife's race					
Husband's race	Spanish	mulatta	mestiza	morisca	coyota	Indian	black
unknown							
Spanish	137	14	2	2		6	101
Mulatto		25				12	
Mestizo			2			4	
Morisco							
Coyote	21	12	1		14	3	
Indian						13	
Black		1	1			2	
unknown							

Table 13: Marriage Patterns in Saltillo, 1793

		Wife's Race				
Husband's Race	Spanish	Coyota	Mestiza	Mulatta	Indian	
Spanish	165	5	2	1	1	
Coyote	17	26	0	4	7	
Mestizo	3	1	1	0	2	
Mulatto	2	10	2	12	10	
Indian	5	10	1	3	10	
Total	192	52	6	20	30	

Table 14: Rate of Exogamy in Saltillo, 1793

Spanish 5.1%
Coyote 51.8%
Mestizo 85.7%
Mulatto 67%
Indian 65.5%

Table 15: Spanish Population, 1777 (females)	% females
Female headed households (widow, single, absent husband): 129	7.24%
Widowed or single Spanish women of marriageable age (over 14): 782	43.0%

Table 16: Spanish Population, 1777 (males)	% of male
Spanish men of marriageable age (over 16): 366	26.3%
Married Spanish men: 242	17.4%

Whether because of its provinciality or because of its still relatively small size (even for colonial standards), Saltillo seems to exhibit a social rigidity (especially after 1790) that was reinforced by Bourbon policies, like the Marriage Pragmatic of 1776, which tried to curtail "unequal" marriages. Interestingly, although the statistical evidence is unclear (or incomplete) at times, an analysis of marriage records reveals that residents of Saltillo appeared to be losing interest in recording racial labels during the 1780s. It was not until a representative of the Inquisition arrived in Saltillo that this practice changed.

Table17: Marriages, 1760

Total Marriages: 85

	Spanish	Mestiza	Morisca	Mulatta	Free M.	Indian	Loba
Spanish	47	1					
Mestizo		4			1	2	
Morisco		1					
Mulatto		2					1
Free M.	2	2			7		
Indian		2	1	1	3	5	
Lobo			1			2	

Table18: Marriages, 1774

Total Marriages: 75

	Spanish	Mestiza	Coyota	Mulatta	Free M.	Loba	Indian
Spanish	37	3		1	1		
Mestizo	2	1			2		1
Coyote	1						
Mulatto							
Free M.	3	1			4		3
Lobo							
Indian		1			5	1	5

Table19: Marriages, 1780

Total Marriages: 54

	Spanish	Mestiza	Free M.	Tlax.	Indian	unknown
Spanish	12					
Mestizo	2					
Free M.			1		1	
Tlax.						1
Indian		3			3	
unknown	1					32

Table20: Marriages, 1790

Total Marriages: 56

	Span	Mest	Moris	Mul	Free M	Pame	Ind	Tlax	?
Span	14								3
Mest									1
Moris				1					
Mul									4
Free M					1				
Pame						1			
Ind			1				5		6
Tlax					1				
?									16

Note that in 1780 there were fifty-four marriages recorded and the race of the bride and groom was unlisted in thirty-two of these. In July of 1790 this note appears in the marriage registry. It reads:

Note: Having taken possession of the parish of the Villa of Saltillo on the day and month of July of this year of seventeen ninety the Señor Br. Don Josef Sanchez de Lague, curate incapite, and ecclesiastic judge of the church, as well as comissioner of the Holy Office of the Inquisition of New Spain, it was determined the marriages continue to be recorded in the following manner.³²⁶

The visiting priest then goes on to provide examples of how each person's race should be listed in the marriage registry. Immediately following this visit each person's race was listed and rates of intermarriage virtually disappeared. This change is clearly visible in the 1800, 1810, and 1815 registries.

³²⁶ "Nota: Aviendo se posesionado de este curato de la Vila de el Saltillo el dia de el mes de Julio de el año de mil setecientos noventa el Señor Br. Don Josef Sanchez de Lague, cura Bro. Vicario incapite, y Juez Ecclesiastico de dicha Parochial Iglesia: Comisario de el Santo Oficio de la Inquisición de esta Nueva España se determinó se sigan sentando a continuacion de este Libro las Partidas de Casamiento ve unentes su tiempo, y son las siguientes."

Table 21: Marriages, 1800

Total Marriages: 84

	Spanish	Coyota	Mulatta	Pame	Indian	?
Spanish	38					
Coyote		32				
Mulatto			2			
Pame				4		
Indian					3	
?	4					1

Table 22: Marriages, 1810

Total Marriages: 85

	Spanish	Coyota	Pame	Indian	?
Spanish	47				
Coyote		34			
Pame			1		
Indian	1				
?	1				

Table 23: Marriages, 1815

Total: 133

	Spanish	Mestiza	Coyota	Mulatta	Indian	?
Spanish	57					
Mestizo		16				
Coyota			4			
Mulatto				1		
Indian					54	
?						1

In addition, there were less racial categories at the end of the colonial period. It is unclear if in fact racial groups were being absorbed (as Patricia Seed argues) into other racial categories, or if individuals who were neither Spanish nor Indian were simply listed as being of mixed heritage, hence the dominance of the

term mestizo/a. In fact, we do not know who had greater say when these records were entered into the parish logs. One marriage 1815 marriage document reads:

16:	In the parochial church of the Villa of Saltillo on
Jose Francisco Galindo	the fifth of February of 1815 the vicar don Juan
with Juana Garcia(,)	Ynocente Peres married José Francisco Galindo(,)
widow	Mestizo(,)
Mestisos	widow of María Ygnacia Echeverria,
	with Juana Garcia(,)
	Indian(,)
	widow of Lusgardo
	Garcia(,)
	As there was no impediment ... ³²⁷

It is unclear if the parish priest was making "editorial comments" on the margins of the marriage record because they found the party's racial claims to be unjustified or if they simply were following a commonly accepted social practice, where women took on their mate's racial category.³²⁸ Taking into consideration the fact that intermarriages were recorded prior to 1780 and that a dramatic change took place immediately following the curates visit in 1790, this would indicate that interracial unions did not end abruptly. It was seen unfavorably by the church and thus they tended either not to marry interracial couples, or most likely the bride simply "adopted" the race of her groom.

In the last year when racial categories were listed in marriage registries there were three primary racial categories, Spanish, Mestizo/a, and Indian. (see table 24)

³²⁷ "En la Yglesia parroquial de la Villa del Saltillo en sinco de Febrero de mil ocho sientos quince el inscripto vicario Ba. Don Juan Ynocente Peres casó a Jose Francisco Galindo Mestiso viudo de Maria Ygnacia Echeverria, con Juana Garcia amonestaciones que fueron inter...los dias veine y dos y veinte y nueve del anterior, y dos de dicho Padrinos Pedro de Avila y Maria mauela Hernandes testigos al berlos casar Jose Gregorio...y Antonio Solis..." Family History Center,

Table 24: Marriages, 1821

Total Marriages: 132

	Spanish	Mestiza	Indian	?
Spanish	63			1
Mestizo		11		
Indian			56	
?				

Although the *sistema de castas* was maintained and apparently reinforced by the introduction of such legislation as the Marriage Pragmatic of 1776, there was less variance in racial categories. By 1821 there were only three distinct categories used in marriage records, whereas in 1790 there were eight. Previous studies suggest that the introduction of terms like *castizo* and *morisco* in the seventeenth century was an effort by whites to sustain the racial hierarchy by naming mixed lighter-skinned people and thus distancing themselves from these groups.³²⁹ If the goal of eighteenth century legislation was to maintain racial distinctions, why would there be less use of *casta* terms and not more, as one might expect? Perhaps it had become unnecessary to use such labels when one term, like *mestizo*, would indicate if a person was from a mixed caste group (which in essence was what colonial authorities were most interested in denoting—that a person was not white). Patricia Seed found that in the 1811 Mexico City census (and in other central Mexican areas) the categories of *mestizo* and *castizo* were no longer used, but instead they opted for the generic all-inclusive term of *casta*. She

³²⁸ Douglas Cope finds these type of sidenote comments in his analysis of Mexico City parish records. *The Limits of Racial Domination*, 56.

³²⁹ John Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978): 176-177.

suggests that the boundary between *castizos* and whites was disintegrating and that *moriscos* were reclassified as mulattoes. Seed explains,

Race and the division of labor continued to be associated in the middle of the eighteenth century, but the boundaries among racial groups were disintegrating, as the separation grew between the cognitive system of labels and the economic division of labor. Economic tasks had always been associated with racial labels, as the colonial economic structure dissolved, so did the racial labels it had imposed.³³⁰

David Brading and Celia Wu's work on León, Guanajuato also appears to agree with Seed's assessment. They argue that by the end of the eighteenth century most people in that region could not describe their own ethnic status (especially between Indians and mulattoes). They argue that this was because there were less barriers between Indian and Hispanic communities. There were in fact two social groups, one included Indians, mulattoes, and some mestizos and the other was composed of Spaniards and most mestizos.³³¹

People of different groups may have associated socially and some were intermarrying, but this did not mean that colonial society was any less rigidly structured. Yet, if one takes into account the number of single Spanish women in Saltillo, the continued correlation between race, class, and status, and the number of "Spaniards" given high burials, the overwhelming conclusion would be that being Spanish was still meaningful. Racial stratification continued to be a part of this colonial society and intermarriage had not changed this in a significant way.

³³⁰ Seed, "Social Dimensions of Race," 600.

³³¹ Brading and Wu, "Population Growth and Crisis," 9.

In addition, racial labels did not significantly diminish in birth records. By 1800 the second most numerous category were *coyotes* (after Spaniards). There were also fewer Indian children. It is around this time that the category of "Indio Pame" comes into greater use. The presence of Indio Pames (part of Apache nation) in birth records seems to indicate that native peoples from outlying areas were making their way to Nueva Vizcaya.

Table 25: Saltillo Births, 1774; *expuestos* (abandoned newborns)-10

	Spaniard	Indian	Coyote	Mulatto	Mestizo	Lobo
Male	75	48	43	16	7	2
Female	74	66	45	13	3	1
Total	149	114	88	29	10	3

Table 26: Saltillo Births, 1780; *expuestos*-6; father unknown-1

	Span	Indian	Coyote	Mulatto	Mestizo	Loba	none ³³²
Male	57	37	24	19	1		3
Female	54	32	29	12	5	1	4
Total	111	69	53	31	6	1	7

Table 27: Saltillo Births, 1790; *expuestos*-15

	Span	Indian	Coy	Mul	Mest	Morisco/a	Slave	none
Male	71	71	12	5	4		1	5
Fem	78	66	26	15	9	4		3
Total	149	137	38	20	13	4	1	8

³³² Children whose race was unlisted were usually ones who were left on someone's doorsteps or that of a hospital or church. They are listed as *expuestos*.

Table 28: Saltillo Births, 1800; *expuestos*-13; illegitimate-18

	Span	Coyote	Indian	none ³³³	Mulatto	Pame	Mestizo
Male	93	58	33	13	8	2	1
Female	104	52	43	6	7	3	1
Total	197	110	76	19	15	5	2

Indians were apparently marrying with other groups in greater numbers at the end of the colonial period. By doing this, their children would not have to pay certain taxes. For these communities there were some benefits to marrying outside the group. This was not the case for Tlaxcalans, who had certain rights because they were "pure" Tlaxcalans.

“Indians” and Tlaxcalans

There were many ways one's race or ethnicity was determined in the colonial world; skin color, culture, dress, parentage, and class were all factors that shaped how one was viewed by society at large. Douglas Cope argues that plebeians determined racial categories in a common-sense way.³³⁴ They were aware of the racial hierarchy imposed by Spaniards but did not passively accept such categorization. Indigenous people came into contact with Spaniards, *castas* and other indigenous groups in the north and they displayed an understanding of

³³³ There were also 16 other births at this time, but their gender and race were unlisted. They were not included in this count.

³³⁴ Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination*, 67.

how this society functioned and what they needed to do in order to best protect their interests.

Racial labels and ethnic identification became more complicated at the end of the colonial period when intermarriage and racial mixing was more common. Although the residents of San Esteban may not have been able to avoid contact with non-Tlaxcalans, they were successful in promoting the idea that they were and had always been a separate community. Clearly, it was not beneficial for them to be perceived as "Indian," since this term had negative connotations.³³⁵ One such example of the difficult process of racial identification in the eighteenth century is illustrated in the letters of a parish priest from the nearby community of Parras. Father José Dionisio Gutiérrez writes colonial administrators complaining about the undue workload being placed on him by indigenous people who constantly ask him for official proof of their ethnicity. In February of 1788 Marcelo Constancio and his sister-in-law María Dominga de los Reyes went to the priest and asked to be given written proof that they were in fact "Indians." In this *Documento de Constancia* the notary public and local priest write:

Marcelo Constancio is a pure Indian, without any mix of another casta, and this is the same for his sister-in-law, María Dominga de los Reyes, and so that this is valid I present the following paper

³³⁵ Ana María Alonso writes, "...on the frontier Indians became radically the other; they were an enemy to be exterminated or segregated in enclaves rather than incorporated into colonial society." *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995): 68.

signed in this town of Santa María de las Parras, February 20th, 1788. Lic. Gutiérrez:

I agree with the original [paper] given to Marcelo Constancio, whom I have seen, and through a verbal request from the Señor Licenciado Don José Dionisio Gutiérrez, parish priest of said town, I certified it. Parras, February, 1788.

In true testimony. Juan de Dios Nuñez Esquibel.³³⁶

Father Gutiérrez consequently wrote the royal tax collectors and explained that although he had certified Marcelo's Indian status, he was not equipped to give each Indian a document stating that they were an indigenous person every time someone left the area to sell their wares. Gutiérrez said that he did not have the time or resources to provide such certification for each person and that he would have to spend all day going through census records in order to provide such vouchers. Instead, Father Gutierrez said that he would be willing to draw up one document that would be used by the Indians from the *Pueblo de Indios* in Parras so that they could all use that certification when they left to sell their fruits and products outside of the area. He suggested that the *Alcaldes Mayores* or *Justicias Ordinarios* (local colonial authorities) should carry out a census similar to the one taken by the curates amongst other indigenous communities. Gutiérrez said that certifying that residents were pure Indians would be a difficult task, as both male

³³⁶ "Documento de Constancia. Marcelo Constancio es Yndio puro sin mezcla de otra casta, y lo mismo su cuñada Maria Dominga de los Reyes y para que conste donde convenga, doy el presente que firmé en este Pueblo de Santa María de las Parras, y Febrero veinte de mil setecientos ochenta y ocho. Licenciado Gutierrez. Concuerta con su original se le dió á Marcelo Constancio que he tenido á la vista de donde por mandato verbal del Señor Licenciado Dn. José Dionisio Gutierrez Cura Vicario Juez Eclesiastico de dicho Pueblo, lo saqué de certificado. Pueblo de Parras, y Febrero de mil setecientos ochenty, y ocho. En testimonio de Verdad. Juan de Dios Nuñez Esquibel." Archivo Parroquial de Parras, Archivo General del Estado de Coahuila. Document no. 556.

and female Indians were marrying other *castas* and their children were being "emancipated." Father Gutiérrez said,

...the last census that the *Administrador de Alcabalas* asked for took one year to complete and was expensive to authenticate; it would always be expensive to make sure the information was correct, as it was one thing to register people and another to make sure the information they gave was correct, especially the Pueblo [indigenous community in Parras]- unless it was the Pueblo that now resided in Parras that originally came from Tlaxcala del Saltillo and other such Pueblos- otherwise there would always be changes that have to be made in the census each year, as there were many who came to the community annually who were "pure" Indians.³³⁷

The parish priest does not seem to question the racial purity of the Tlaxcalans from Parras who resettled in Saltillo. He takes it as a given that the Tlaxcalan peoples would not be anything but pure "Indians." Tlaxcalans seem to have successfully been able to portray themselves as a separate ethnic community. In the end, Father Gutiérrez thus issued one statement that was to be delivered to the customs house where he stated that there were not enough local priests in the region that could possibly certify that the petitioners were pure Indians.

³³⁷ "Y es el caso; que como en todos los Pueblos, y principalmente en este; co usted que se há criado en el, le consta de experiencia; se están casando los Indios y las Indias con otras castas, y emandipandose hijos de los Indios puros que ellos no lo son pur la desigualdad de sus padres, y era menester todos los años hacer nuevo Padron. Y ha de saber usted que el Padron que mandó hacer el Excelentísimo Señor casi me costo más de un año de taréa, y Dinero para purificarlo; y siempre costará muchísimo trabajo el hacerlo, con la pureza que se requiere; por que es muy distinto registrar las Partidas con las citas, y luces que dan los Pretendientes, á ponerse uno á investigar sobre todo elPueblo: á mas de que siendo el Pueblo que ay hoy, originario del de Tlaxcala del Saltillo; y de otros Pueblos; siempre debe haver inovacion en el Padron anualmente, por los muchos que con sus filiaciones, segun dispone el Excelentísimo Señor Virrey, se agregan de otras partes, y son Puros Indios." Archivo Parroquial de Parras, 1788.

Therefore, he gave the customs house one document that would have to suffice as proof that the indigenous community of Parras was of pure Indian descent.

Conclusion

Although statistical records tell us much about the forces that shaped ideologies of race, they do not address how *castas* and indigenous peoples internalized elite beliefs. Recent scholarship on colonial Mexico notes that plebeian society did not accept elite racial ideology, but devised ways to deal with and oftentimes reject these social constraints.³³⁸ Indigenous people also found ways to deal with increasingly rigid racial perceptions.

What this chapter proposed is that official concepts regarding race became more rigid at the end of the colonial period in this northern region and this process affected ethnic identity formation.³³⁹ The beginnings of a class-consciousness was evident at the end of the eighteenth century, but this did not mean that ethnicity did not continue to be a relevant concept. It was as real as racial ideologies (or racism). Ethnic identification was in effect the way in which some indigenous groups chose to channel their growing dissatisfaction with a society that placed greater demands on their communities. For Tlaxcalans, late colonial

³³⁸ Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination*.

³³⁹ In reference to Chihuahuan society at the end of the colonial period, Ana María Alonso writes, "...these processes of Hispanization and Indianization indicate that the frontier was a zone of intercultural exchange and transformation; the fluidity of ethnicity suggests that not only the boundaries of color but also those of culture and way of life were blurred and subject to redefinition in practice. This is precisely why official rhetoric was so rigid; the binary opposition

society's preoccupation with racial labels, the growing number of Spanish and casta settlers which placed greater demands on their lands and resources, and the negative connotation given to anyone labeled as an Indian in the north ("*indio bárbaro*") prompted them to assert their status as noble Tlaxcalans, as a way to protect their self-defined group.

of civilization and barbarism asserted the existence of an absolute difference that could never be sustained in practice." *Thread of Blood*, 69.

CHAPTER 6

Tlaxcalan Ethnic Identity

In 1799 Josef Joaquin Ramos, a resident of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, went to court in Saltillo to try and stop the marriage of his daughter to someone outside of the community, someone he felt was not their equal. He supported his case by arguing for his rights as a noble Tlaxcalan. Perhaps we might not imagine that indigenous people could achieve noble status in the highly stratified colonial world. We might think that a *hidalgo* would have great landed wealth and would be given rights and privileges not made available to others. For most of the colonial period migrant Tlaxcalans in northern New Spain struggled to sustain themselves, but unlike other nomadic indigenous groups that populated the region the residents of San Esteban prevailed and by the eighteenth century one could say that in comparison to other native groups in the north they were in fact a successful indigenous community. They generally owned and worked their own land and had privileges that other indigenous or *casta* groups were not allotted. Yet, they were not "nobles" in the strict sense of the word. They were not equal to Spaniards and did not have the type of wealth a Spanish *hacendado* might have. What did Don Josef Joaquin mean when he said that he was a noble

Tlaxcalan? What did the community of San Esteban want when they petitioned royal officials for the reinstatement of their *hidalgo* rights? How did they give meaning to this term? In one sense Tlaxcalans in the north were given certain privileges by the viceroy in the sixteenth century when they agreed to help colonize the northern provinces. One of these rights was that Tlaxcalans would be treated as *hidalgos*. Their eighteenth century petitions were an attempt to reestablish these rights. If they had been given such a status why did they have to spend so much time and energy trying to reestablish it? Why did this become such an important concern in the eighteenth century?

As indigenous groups came into closer contact with other social groups in the seventeenth and eighteenth century conflicts developed over the use of land and resources. As a result, Tlaxcalans grew weary of outsiders and reinforced the social boundaries that defined them as a special or distinct community deserving of privileges and protection from Spanish colonial authorities.³⁴⁰ This chapter will discuss this process of ethnic resurgence during the eighteenth century, as it helps explain how indigenous communities reacted to outside social, political, and economic changes taking place in northern New Spain at this time.

³⁴⁰ Kevin Terraciano writes, "Increased competition for local resources provoked a more assertive expression of ethnic and corporate identities in response to new challenges...In some case, the expression of ethnic identity represented a recognition and validation of colonial social relations. Some people used the term to promote their particular interests within the Spanish legal system, as members of 'repúblicas de indios.'" *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001): 328.

Ethnic Identity

This analysis does not assume that ethnicity, race, or culture are interchangeable, but that people consciously choose particular cultural markers so as to distinguish themselves from other surrounding social groups. For indigenous people this process of ethnic assertion was a way in which they protected themselves from social changes that negatively affected them. This analysis relies on Frederik Barth's ideas regarding ethnic identity formation. He writes:

11. When defined as an ascriptive and exclusive group, the nature of continuity of ethnic units is clear: it depends on the maintenance of a boundary. The cultural features that signal the boundary may change, and the cultural characteristics of the members may likewise be transformed, indeed, even the organizational form of the group may change-yet the fact of continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders allows us to specify the nature of continuity, and investigate the changing cultural form and content.
12. Socially relevant factors alone become diagnostic for membership, not the over, 'objective' differences which are generated by other factors. It makes no difference how dissimilar members may be in their overt behaviour - if they say they are A, in contrast to another cognate category B, they are willing to be treated and let their own behaviour be interpreted and judged as A's and not as B's; in other words, they declare their allegiance to the shared culture of A's. The effects of this, as compared to other factors influencing actual behaviour, can then be made the object of investigation.³⁴¹

Ethnic identity is constantly being redefined in accordance with the changes that are taking place in society. A group determines that certain members

of society have common interests and thus erects boundaries that define them as a separate social group. The development of ethnic identity does not happen in a vacuum, but occurs through constant interaction with other groups.

Consequently, communities may choose to select particular cultural traits and to establish historical traditions to justify this identity, or the social boundaries that define them as a coherent group.³⁴²

There are facets of Tlaxcalan culture that distinguished them from other peoples in the region. Language was one marker that differentiated the residents of San Esteban from others in the north. Tlaxcalan records indicate that many Tlaxcalans only spoke Nahuatl until the early seventeenth century and a few Náhuatl testaments exist for the eighteenth century, indicating that some members of the community continued to speak the language exclusively.³⁴³ Dress might have been another way in which Tlaxcalans were distinctive. In Tlaxcalan testaments women include their *huipil* as an item of clothing that they pass on to other females upon their death. Tlaxcalans also had a historic ownership of land, they were not nomadic, and they were Christians. Tlaxcalans took pride in emphasizing their devotion to the Catholic faith.³⁴⁴ In addition, unlike other

³⁴¹ Frederik Barth, "Introduction," *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969): 14-15.

³⁴² Fredrik Barth, "Introduction," *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Fredrik Barth, ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 35.

³⁴³ David Frye notes that the people of Mexquitic, another Tlaxclan settlement located in San Luis Potosí, continued to speak Nahuátl at home until the 1840s. *Indians into Mexicans* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996): 48.

³⁴⁴ Tlaxcalans had their own brotherhoods or *cofradías*.

groups (but much like Spanish elites) Tlaxcalans rarely married outside their group. Indeed, it is important to emphasize that Tlaxcalan culture and their lived identity was rich and very fluid. At this time, this work is primarily concerned with analyzing how they represented themselves in the public realm and why they chose this identity.

Tlaxcalans appear to be conscious that they are part of a local community, but not of a broader racial group or a politically defined nation.³⁴⁵ There was no reason for them to unite across ethnic lines, as this only meant that they had to share already limited resources. In addition, in neither Nahuatl nor Spanish-language documents did the residents of San Esteban refer to themselves as Indians. The closest they came to using the term "indio" was in court documents when they said they were "indios Tlaxcaltecas." They clearly understood how they were seen and how they should represent themselves in the public sphere. In more private papers, like testaments, they did not call themselves Indians or Tlaxcalans, but would identify their town of origin. They would most often write, "...and here I reside in this Pueblo of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala of Saltillo."³⁴⁶ There was no need for the members of the community to assert their

³⁴⁵ See Restall, Lockhart, Terraciano

³⁴⁶ In a Nahuatl testament Melchora Francisca writes, "In the name of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, may their will be followed. Let all know that my memory is inscribed in this testament and that it is done by me: Melchora Francisca, and here I reside in the Pueblo of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala del Saltillo..." 1745, Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, Testaments, c10, e15, 2f; Doña Potenciana Leocaria writes, "In the name of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen. That all those that see the content of this my memory that is my testament should know that it is my will. My name is Doña Potenciana Leocaria, here I reside

ethnic status when dealing with one another. A conscious identity is developed through contact with other social groups and is maintained and reasserted because there are logical, practical reasons for the group to remain separate. In reference to identity formation Teresa de Lauretis writes, "consciousness is never fixed, never attained once and for all because discursive boundaries change with historical conditions."³⁴⁷ In the eighteenth century Tlaxcalans chose to emphasize certain social/historical aspects of their community so they could create barriers between themselves and other social groups. In so doing they hoped to protect the interests of the self-defined community.

The study of ethnic identity in the colonial period is problematic, as we do not have direct access to individual accounts. Instead, we must rely on sources that only indirectly tell us about the development of ethnic identity. Tlaxcalan leaders and Spanish officials produced many of the documents used in this study. Consequently, one could derive the distinct impression that Tlaxcalans developed a unique identity, as in documents like land titles and official papers they are fighting to remain "separate"- so they could retain the lands that were given to the

inthis Pueblo of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, in the barrio of Nuestra Señora Santa Anna." 1750, AMS, T, c11, e10, 2f; Doña Barbara maría writes, "...En el Nombre de Dios Padre, Dios Hijo, Dios Espíritu Santo solo Dios verdadero Amen=Sepan quanta Viesen este mi testamento mí última voluntad como yo Da. Barbara María originaria de este Pueblo de San Estevan Nueva Tlaxcala y asentada en el Barrio de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción y digo que estoy enferma de todo mi cuerpo pero sana de mi entendimiento con el Padre y Nuestro Señor..." 1782, T, AMS, c18, e31, 2f; María Ybalda writes, "En el Nombre de la Santísima Trinidad Dios Padre, Dios Hijo y Dios Espíritu Santo. Amen=que sepan todos quantos viesan esta mi memoria de testamento que lo hago yo María Ybalda vecina hija de este Pueblo de San Estevan de la Nueva Tlaxcala ya sentada en el Barrio de Nuestro Patron San Estevan ..." 1785, AMS, T, c19, e30, 2f.

group two hundred years earlier. They are struggling to both preserve communal lands and the ethnic group.³⁴⁸ In his study of Mixtec land titles Kevin Terraciano points out that,

The title's authors and backers claimed the disputed land on the grounds of historical events told from an ethnic perspective. They descended from a Ñudzahui yya who had fought of the Nahuas and graciously received the Spaniards, and who had set aside certain lands for the Ñudzahui people. By maintaining the boundaries of their ethnic identity they sought to maintain the boundaries of their lands.³⁴⁹

Therefore, these documents serve a very specific purpose; they are records of a struggle to maintain the group's lands and rights. Consequently, San Esteban's leaders produce many of the documents used to analyze ethnic identity. Did these petitions or legal cases represent the perspective of the community as a whole?

There is evidence to suggest that they do. The Tlaxcalan town council may have had conflicts of interest when they dealt with local Spanish or royal authorities

³⁴⁷ Teresa de Lauretis, ed. *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986): 8.

³⁴⁸ Marcellos Carmagnani writes, "En el modo de defenderse adoptado logramos ver, con mejor precisión, en quién radica la territorialidad, pues el documento nos precisa que todos los habitantes del territorio, por medio de sus autoridades electorales, firman un pacto según el cual 'otorgan por sí y or todos los naturales de el común cada uno por el de su Pueblo que en el pleito contra Don Martín José de Villagómez siguen han de guardar inviolablemente las condiciones siguientes. La primera que todos anánimes y conformes han de contribuir prorrate cada uno según su posibiliad con los reales necesarios para costear el pleito durante el tiempo que durase y el rateo se ha de hacer por el Gobernaodor y Alcaldes informado el caudal de cada uno.'... 'todos los que se saliesen afuera de esta escriptura aunque sean nobles y Principales por el solo el hecho sin otra circunstancia se tengan por hombres y todos sus sucerores bajos e inútiles en lo futuro obtener ningún cargo en la república y lo mismo se entienda en los que no hubiesen entrado ni quisieren entrar en esta escriptura por faltar los susodichos a la defensa de su Patria y a solicitar la libertad." Escritura pública, 17 de Septiembre, 1721, BNAH, p. 22. *El regreso de los dioses: El proceso de reconstitución de la identidad étnica en Oaxaca, Siglos XVII y XVIII* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 188): 87.

³⁴⁹ Kevin Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 338.

because they were quite probably the most well off members of society who owned the most lands. Yet, testament records indicate that many in San Esteban at the very least owned a small plot of land. In addition, at the end of the colonial period the San Esteban town council is concerned that members of the community are selling their lands to outsiders. In eighteenth century petitions they ask that residents of San Esteban not be allowed to sell lands to non-Tlaxcalans, thus diminishing the community's control over the economic base that would help maintain group cohesion. Spanish policies that allowed Spaniards to use Tlaxcalan lands, and that prohibited the residents of San Esteban from using nearby land and resources, affected the community as a whole. Indeed, when Saltillo authorities presented the residents of San Esteban with edicts they did not specify certain members (elite or commoner), but spoke to the whole town of San Esteban. San Esteban's leaders appear to present the prevailing perspective. In two late colonial documents Tlaxcalans allow us a glimpse into the community's organization. Eighty members of the community signed a 1781 letter to the original province of Tlaxcala.³⁵⁰ That is many more than were part of the town council and a large percentage of the total population of San Esteban, which quite probably was not over 3,000 to 3,500 at that time. In a 1794 letter where the residents of San Esteban petition religious authorities for a permit to build a chapel for the Virgin of Guadalupe they clearly spell out who will serve as their

³⁵⁰ Miguel Lira y Ortega, *Colección de documentos para la historia de Tlaxcala y México*

representatives in Monterrey. In said letter they write that these men are there representing the community as a whole and they give them the power to speak for them. They write,

...so that they can go on to Monterrey to get us the corresponding licenses, we empower and give permission to Don Aparicio Valverde and Don Juan Inocente Cortes, our Pueblo's sons, and under whose name they represent us, our rights and actions, only to solicit said licenses...in our name they will get these, the two previously mentioned subjects were thus commissioned to do this! We renounce the laws that may favor us so that they will accomplish this goal and if necessary they will turn to royal authorities and especially ecclesiastical administrators....³⁵¹

Yet, it would be an oversimplification to imply that Tlaxcalans' leaders did not have a vested interest in maining the group's ethnic boundaries. In his study of Guatemalan society Greg Grandin found that some indigenous communities at the end of the colonial period became dissatisfied with the representation they received from their leaders. He writes,

(Tlaxcala: Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala-FONAPAS, 1982): 193-199.

³⁵¹ "...para que puedan pasado a Monterrey a conseguir de vosotros las licencias correspondientes debíamos dar, y damos todo nuestro poder y facultad cuenta en Dro se requiere, mas pueda y deba baler a Don Aparicio Valverde y a Don Juan Ynocente Cortes, hijos de este Pueblo, y quienes en Nuestro Nombre representando Nuestras propias personas, derechos, y acciones para esto solamente solicitaran dichas licencias alegando para ello, cuanto tubiesen por combeniente hasta consegirlas obligandonos, como por el presente documento nos obligamos en toda forma con nuestras personas, y bienen habidos, y por haber, no solo a la erección de dicha capilla, con las medidas en la forma dicha hasta conluirla perfectamente, a ornamentarla interiormente, pra su perpetua substancia sino a dar por baledero cuanto en virtud de este Nuestro poder hiciesen y consigiesen, los dos sujetos mencionados, y comisionados para esto! Y renunciamos cuantas leyes pueDED favorecernos, pasar que assi nos lo hagan cumplir en caso nesecario sujetandonos para ello a la jurisdicción, real y especialmente a la eclesiastica: y lo firmamos, en dicho Pueblo dicho día, mes, y año= Aparicio Valverde y Juan Ynocente Cortes, hijos y vezinos moradores del Pueblo de San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala del Saltillo por si y a nombre del comun de dicho Pueblo, representando sus propias personas, derechos, y acciones,

For the elites, the very position of privilege that allowed them to mobilize resources in both the Hispanic and the K'iché worlds also caught them in a 'double bind.' To avoid social ostracism and loss of communal power, they had to respond to popular pressure and limit, to a degree, their attempts at private gain and Hispanic acculturation...Ironically, this class alliance was predicated on the deepening of ethnic divisions. Both to maintain their political prerogatives and mobilize communal resources, K'iché elites needed caste divisions to be maintained; Spaniards, and later Ladinos, needed *principales* to help administer the city and maintain order...The maintenance of these ethnic divisions not only facilitated governance but culturally divided the popular classes and thwarted the development of multiethnic alliances..."³⁵²

In other words, indigenous leaders wanted to maintain ethnic boundaries as this was how they derived their power within and outside the community. That notwithstanding, this discussion does not address the class divisions within the community of San Esteban, primarily because of the types of primary sources that were considered at this time. A future more intensive study of land records, testaments, and notary documents could reveal much about the internal dynamics of this Tlaxcalan community. As has been previously stated, this study is primarily interested in analyzing the political identity of the northern Tlaxcalans at the end of the colonial period. Indeed, although San Esteban's public documents were clearly shaped by the town council's concerns, they do appear to express the views of the community at large.

como el poder Juridico, que en doy faxas utiles..."1794. Archivo Historico de Saltillo, Presidencia Municipal, c46, e8, 6f.

³⁵² Greg Grandin, *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000): 66-67.

History, Memory and Identity

One way to approximate whether or not Tlaxcalans from San Esteban thought of themselves as a distinct group is to consider the histories they recorded in the land title documents that emerged in the eighteenth century. The fact that these stories exist at all tell us that the residents of San Esteban are trying to define the group's origins. The stories may not be accurate, but they do illustrate how the Tlaxcalans tried to retain cultural boundaries between themselves and others. The creation of these historical "myths" indicate that Tlaxcalans remembered why the group originally went north and consequently felt the need to record this oral history. The stories keep changing, adapting to what the Tlaxcalans need in a particular moment just as ethnic identity is also constantly reformulated to fit the group's needs.

When the history of San Esteban is retold in official documents the role of the Tlaxcalans is clearly spelled out. In a 1768 legal case where a 1591 land title was presented to support the Tlaxcalans' cause, their role and place within the frontier order is also discussed. They write,

...as is known Don Luis de Velasco, my Viceroy, Governor, and General Captain of New Spain, advising on how important it is to preserve the Peace amongst the Chichimeca Indians who are warlike and procuring, as he has used the most peaceful methods until today, to reduce to the true knowledge of our Catholic faith and evangelical doctrine and so that this is accomplished he tried to establish amongst them settlements composed of friendly Indians,...so that with their presence and communications they will become peaceful...the ancestors of said my Viceroy have not been able to accomplish this,...by order of said my Viceroy the

Indians of the Province of Tlaxcala will give four-hundred married Indians for these settlements.³⁵³

In a 1729 dispute the Tlaxcalans present what once again was supposed to be a 1591 foundation document.

...let them try to establish settlements of said Indians to reduce and attract them [nomadic tribes] with friendship and gentleness to accept peace and from my royal (hacienda) supply what was and is necessary. They will primarily attend to the service of God, our Father, as the said Chichimeca Indians will liberate themselves from risking their souls and will perdition and so they will be saved and so that all the kingdom will live in peace and conformity and it is already known where they will be able to settle and will develop establishments by friendly Indians from peaceful towns and so said peaceful settlements will be created with greater security and more permanence (asiento) and perpetuity-dealt with Don Luis de Velasco..³⁵⁴

In the Tlaxcalans' version of their history they are the necessary arbiters that helped both the Spanish colonizers and nomadic tribes by bringing about a

³⁵³ "...sabed que Don Luis de Velasco mi Virrey e Governador y Capitan General de la Nueva España, advirtiendo a lo mucho que importa la conservación de la Paz de los indios Chichimecos de guerra y procurando como hasta aquí lo ha heho por los medios mas suabes reducirlos al verdadero conocimiento de nuestra santa fee Catholica y doctrina evangelica para que esto mejor se consiga a tratado de hazer entré ellos poblaciones de indios amigos, medio que muchos años ha todos le han tenido y tienen por demas sierto y conveniente, para que con su compañía e comunicación, se inclinasen a la quietud, sosiego y conixión que se pretende aunque esto de tanto tiempo a esta parte, como ha que se trata ha tenido tanta dificultad que los antecesores del dicho mi Virrey no lo han podido conseguir, ha sido nuestro señor servido de facilitar ahora aviendose movido por orden del dicho mi Virrey los indios de la Provincia de Tlaxcala a dar cuatro sientos indios casados para estas poblaciones." Carlos Manuel Valdés and Ildefonso Dávila del Bosque, *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila* (San Luis Potosí: El Colegio de San Luis/ Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala, 1991): 18-19.

³⁵⁴ "...que traten de aser y agan las poblaciones de los dichos indios y los redscan y atraingan con amistad y suabidad a la pax y de mi real asienda provehiere lo que para esto a sido y es necesaro atendiendo principalmente al serbicio de Dios nuestro señor ya que los dichos indios chichimecos se libren del riesgo de sus almas y perdicion y las puedan salbar y todo el dicho reino viva en pas y conformidad y esta ya visto donde se podran asentar e fundar e y a dar a ello algunos indios amigos de los pueblos pacificos e para que las dichas poblaciones de paz se pudiesen haser con mas seguridad y mejor asiento y perpetuidad trato Don Luis de Velasco." Valdés and del Bosque, *Los tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 72.

relatively peaceful conquest. A central point in land titles was that Tlaxcalans were to be *hidalgos* in perpetuity. One such document states,

That all the Indians that are outside the said province of Tlaxcala who want to establish settlements with said Chichimecas are themselves and their descendants forever *hidalgos* free of all tribute, *pecho*, taxes and personal service and at no time nor for any reason can they be asked to perform personal services...that they are not sent to live amongst Spaniards or those that are different from them and if through coincidence they live near one another there will be a distinction of neighborhoods and Spaniards will be prohibited from taking or buying land in Tlaxcalan neighborhoods...³⁵⁵

Although the Tlaxcalans may have agreed to help with the colonization process, and to incorporate other indigenous groups, it is unclear if they accomplished the latter goal. Parish records indicate that people of the Guachichil, Otomí, Chichimeca, Borrado, and Tarascan tribes were buried in the San Esteban cemetery as late as the mid-seventeenth century, but not in large numbers. During these early years Tlaxcalans may have married members of these native groups, yet marriage data for the parish does not record such occurrences.³⁵⁶ In later years the residents of San Esteban not only did not want Spaniards to buy or take away their lands, they also did not want Chichimecas to live amongst them. They make this clear in one such petition. They write,

³⁵⁵ "Que todos los indios que hay fueren de la dicha ciudad e provincia de Tlaxcala a poblar de nuevo con los dichos Chichimecos sean ellos y sus descendientes perpetuamente hidalgos libres de todo tributo, pecho, alcabala, e servicio personal y en ningun tiempo ni por alguna razon se le pueda pedir ni llevar cosa alguna etc. que donde ubieren de hazer los asientos no los manden poblar juntamente con españoles y no distintos de por si de suerte que se pueblen cerca unos de los otros sea con distincion de barrio y prohibicion a los españoles que no pueden tomar ni comprar solar en el barrio de Tlaxcaltecas..." Ibid, 73.

³⁵⁶ Defunciones, San Esteban, 1632-1807. Family History Center, Mormon Archives, Austin, TX.

That the distribution of land for settlements be apart and distinct from the Tlaxcalans, these will live on their own, and that of the Chichimeca...so that in all times and forever the lands, *pastos*, *montes*, rivers, fisheries, salt mines, quarries, and mills, and other kinds of haciendas will be given to each part and at no time will one Indian be able to enter into the ownership of the others' lands or any other type of possession by sale, donation, nor any other reason or cause...and in said settlements homes will be built and established in distinct neighborhoods, each group on its own, so that neither Chichimecas or Spaniard will live amongst them because this will prove harmful...³⁵⁷

These titles tell us that by the eighteenth century Tlaxcalans saw themselves as distinct group that wanted to retain their land, rights, and ethnic identity. These concepts are deeply interrelated. Anya Royce argues that for a group to maintain its identity they needed local autonomy. She writes,

The more economically independent the groups involved are the better their chances for resistance unless opposition encourages an alliance. When a people no longer controls its own subsistence base, it also loses the means for an effective independent identity; for when the livelihood is provided by outsiders, the group's allegiance and goals becomes those of the providers. Psychologically, being dependent weighs negatively on resistance. However, if a group has demonstrated the ability to resist, periods of dependence may be less damaging and may even be turned to the group's advantage.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁷ "Que el repartimiento se hiziere para las poblaciones de tierras sea apartado y distinto de suerte que el de los Tlaxcaltecos este de por si y el de los chichimecos por el consiguiente y señalen y arrojenen igualmente de manera que en todo tiempo e para siempre las tierras, pastos, montes, rios, y perquerias, salinas, caleras, y molinos, y otros generos de haciendas y esten dadas a cada parte sin que ningun tiempo puedan los indios entrar a la pertenencia de los otros en tierra de estancias ni otroo genero de posesion por venta, donacion, ni otra razon ni causa...y en las dichas poblaciones se asienten y agan sus casas en ellas mismas en barrio distinto quadrillas de por si sin que los Chichimecos ni españoles se asienten entre ellos porque con esto se escusan daños..." Valdés and del Bosque, *Los tlaxcaltecos en Coahuila*, 73-75.

³⁵⁸ Anya Peterson Royce, *Ethnic Identity: Strategies of Diversity* (Blomington, IN: Indiana University, 1982): 58.

The Tlaxcalans struggled to preserve the social boundaries that separated them from other groups because they would therefore be able to retain their land base and economic independence.

A "Peaceful Conquest"

Tlaxcalans' sought to define the group's boundaries because it was not in their best interest to be treated like other indigenous groups in the north. Tlaxcalans knew from their arrival in the region that they were different. As they often stated in legal documents and petitions, they were "conquerors." They were not a nomadic/non-Christian group and therefore they expected to be given the privileges appropriate to those who helped Spain in the colonization process. Both Spaniard and Tlaxcalan understood the role the latter played in the region. The Tlaxcalans were there to colonize and reduce (*reducir*) the nomadic tribes so those Spanish colonists could best exploit mineral deposits and indigenous labor. When Tlaxcalans requested acknowledgement of their privileges from Spanish officials, they asked to be treated as colonizers. Royal officials abided and responded to one such petition by ordering that the Tlaxcalans', "...privileges be respected as the Tlaxcalans are settlers."³⁵⁹

One cannot ignore that nomadic Indians' rejection of Spanish rule and consequent attacks on religious, civil and military towns and outposts in the north

also caused anger and fear amongst central New Spanish authorities. Indian wars continued throughout the colonial period and consequently northern society was in a continual state of alert. Roads were especially dangerous, as travelers left themselves open to sporadic attacks. In 1784 an edict was issued in Durango ordering that all the crosses placed on the road to mark the settlers' deaths at the hands of Indian attacks should be removed, as they only created fear in Spanish settlements and many chose not to fight back. This only "allowed the Barbarians to win more easily and amplified their pride, as they know what each cross signifies."³⁶⁰

The distinction made by both Tlaxcalan and Spaniard between nomadic/barbarians and settled/Christianized Indians was necessary for the colonization process.³⁶¹ This distinction divided indigenous groups in the north.

³⁵⁹ "...se les guarden y hagan guardar los Privilegios así de Tlaxcaltecas, como de Pobladores..." Silvio Zavala and María del Carmen Velázquez, eds. *Temas del Virreinato: Documentos del Archivo Municipal del Saltillo* (Saltillo, MX: Gobierno del Estado de Coahuila, 1990): 81.

³⁶⁰ "El Señor Comandante General destas provincias internas ha despachado con fecha de 22 de Diciembre último la orden del tenor siguiente: De resultar de una de las conferencias que tube con el Ilustrísimo Señor Obispo desta capital, Don fray Antonio de los Reyes, en los días que recibió en ella, resolví mandar quitar todas las cruces que hallan puestas sobre los caminos de unos a otros lugares en acuerdo todas las que mueren a manos de los enemigos así pura precavar las irreverencias y veliperdios a que estan expuestas, como por lo que conduce a intimidar a los pasajeros [y los] parajes han sido ultima de dichos enemigos, a su pensamiento esto los desanima para defenderse si los asaltan contribuyendo el (?) y que triunfen más fácilmente los Barbaros al mismo tiempo que les aumentas su (?) y orgullo pues saven lo que desistan dichas cruces, y para que se quiten desde luego circulara V.S. la orden combeniente con inserción desta a los justicias de todos los Pueblos y Misiones de la Gobernación de su cargo preveniendoles tambien que en lo subsesido no permitan que se ponga ninguna." 1784. AMS, PM, C36, e74, 1f.

³⁶¹ David Frye writes, "As the memory of the Chichimeca Wars faded, and as the surviving Chichimecas themselves died out, the status of the Tlaxcalans of Mexquitic slowly declined. The image that their leaders promoted of themselves as a civilizing influence, a people whose Catholic faith and whose *policía humana* would bring reason to the wild Chichimecas, lost currency in the Spanish world of colonial San Luis." *Indians into Mexicans*, 50.

By giving the Tlaxcalans and other sedentary groups a special status, the Spanish were better able to subdue nomadic groups like the Apaches, who were much more difficult to control.³⁶² In her study of casta paintings Ilona Katzew notes that the last pair at the bottom of most casta portraits of race mixture was usually an Indian couple. She writes,

Equally significant is the inclusion of an Indian couple at the end of most casta cycles, who are labeled Indios Bárbaros (Barbarian Indians), Indios Gentiles (Heathen Indians), Indios Apaches (Apache Indians), and most commonly Indios Mecos. The term meco—a contraction of Chichimeca, from the Nahuátl *chichi* (dog) and *mecati* (lineage)—was the generic appellation used to refer to the 'uncivilized,' warrior-like Indians that inhabited the colony...It is well-known that throughout the colonial period unassimilated groups of Indians, inhabiting northern Mexico, aroused great fear among the population; their conversion to the Christian faith was a constant preoccupation of colonial authorities. Descriptions of the 'callous' nature of the Indians about in the literature of the period...It is their positioning [in casta paintings], more than the way they are represented, that determines the place they occupied within colonial society. ³⁶³

The positioning of nomadic peoples at the bottom of the casta painting reflected colonial society's derogatory view of northern indigenous groups, as they were

³⁶² In his study of violence and colonialism Michael Taussig writes, "Christianity assumed importance in the culture of conquest. The distinction between Christian and heathen Indian became ideologically decisive because of its importance in facilitating the legalities of enslavement and the use of military force." *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 142; In her study of Chihuahua Ana María Alonso writes, "ethnicity was not grounded in the subjection of Indians as economically useful bodies but instead in the conquest of 'savage' bodies whose 'wildness' was seen as so socially destructive that it precluded their utility as a force of production." *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995): 55-64.

³⁶³ In her study of casta paintings and color "Casta Paintings: Identity and Social Stratification in Colonial Mexico," *Laberinto: An Electronic Journal of Modern Hispanic Literatures and Culture* 1:2 (Autumn 1997).

seen as uncivilized and unchristian. Slaves or blacks may have been close to the bottom of the colonial social hierarchy, but nomadic Indians lacked the elements (language, culture, civility, and religion) which were valued in this society. The northern Indians' behavior was not seen as anything but barbaric.

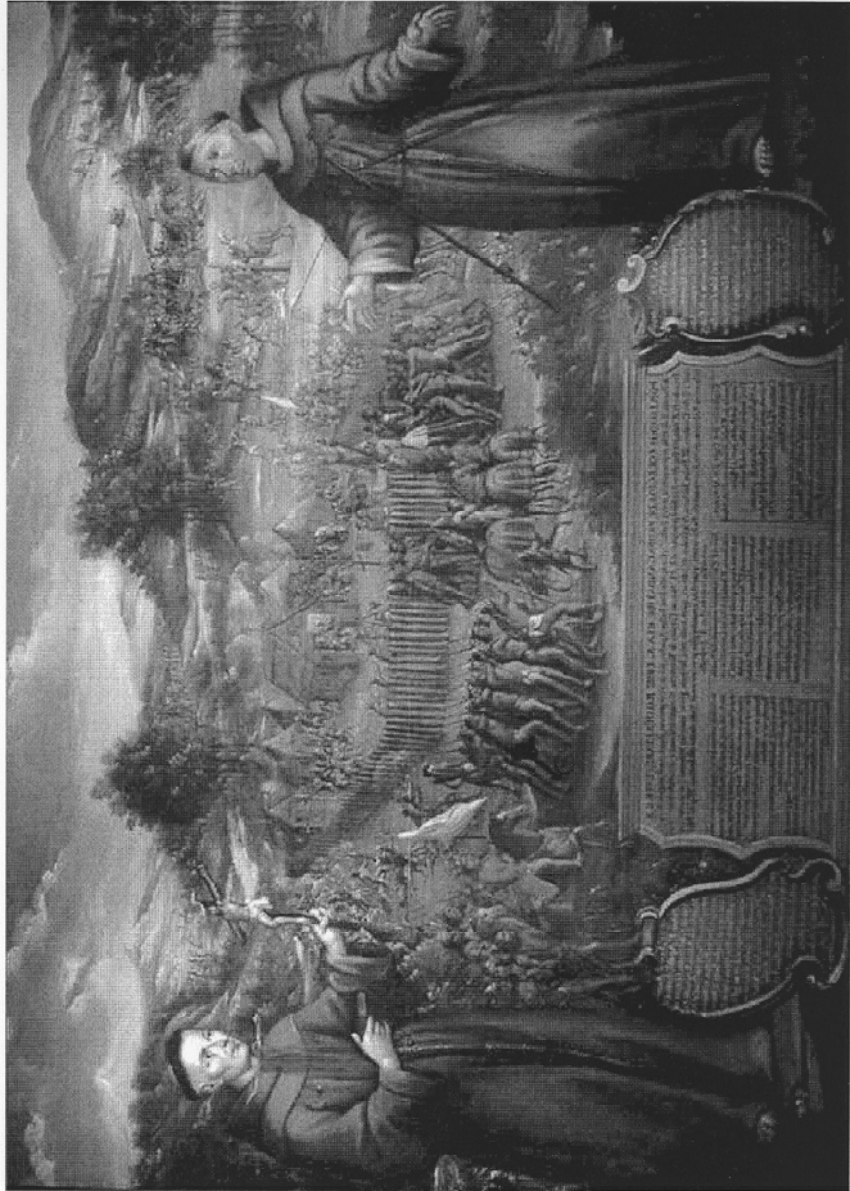
In quite possibly the only historical depiction of the northeastern Indians during the eighteenth century, the painting of the massacre of Franciscan priests at mission San Saba (located in the modern-day state of Texas), the painter expressed the priest's sacrifice and martyrdom in the north. [see image on following page] It was commissioned by one of the slain priest's cousins, Pedro de Terreros. So writes Sam D. Ratcliffe that the "canvas was soon famous in Spain as well as Mexico and served beautifully as a piece of contemporary propaganda and ...current morality."³⁶⁴ (see painting on following page)

In many ways the Tlaxcalans' story is deeply connected to that of the nomadic tribes that no longer exist and that left no written sources. The conquest in the north was not just a meeting of two cultures; it was marked by overt and daily violence. In the final analysis, why would Spanish royal authorities care about and support a relatively small sedentary indigenous community in the distant north like San Esteban? They cared because these sedentary settlements

³⁶⁴ Sam D. Ratcliffe, "Escenas de martirio: Notes on the Destruction of Mission San Saba," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 94 (April 1991):

The Destruction of Mission San Saba in the Province of Texas and the Martyrdom of Fathers Alonso de Terreros and Joseph Santiesteban, 1765

A photograph of this painting was taken by Dr. Grant Hall and is available on www.texasbeyonddiscovery.net. It was reproduced here with the permission of Dr. Grant Hall.



provided an ideological justification for the wars with nomadic groups that led to their enslavement and eventual extermination in the northeast. Nomads were expected to follow the example set by Tlaxcalans who lived sedentary lives, worshiped Catholic deities, and respected colonial policies. If they chose not to, then they "deserved" to be killed for not abiding by these imposed colonial rules of engagement.

Once captured in a just war, northern nomadic peoples played an important role, as they helped meet local labor needs. In 1703 a visiting royal judge, Don Juan Antonio de Sarria y Ayarra, received complaints from Saltillo because Doña María de las Casas Cepeda, a local landowner, was sheltering Chichimeca Indians. The judge issued a statement that outlined how the Chichimecas were forced to perform labor for Spaniards. Although he concludes by saying that the Chichimecas should be paid for their labor, the fact that they remained with María de las Casas indicates that they did not want to leave the area or that she had not allowed them to go because she needed them to work her lands. In either case, they are clearly not free to work where they so choose. Juan Antonio de Sarria states,

...the Chichimeca Indians are to be placed and deposited in the areas where it will be most convenient and the ones relocated by the general, Don Agustín de Echeverz y Subiza, have left for different places and have been sheltered by Doña María de las Casas Cepeda who has given a variety of reasons for her actions. Your Majesty had issued an order to Captain Ambrosio de Cepeda and Gonzalo López Berlanga stating that the Chichimecas should

be taken to Bernardino Sánchez's mill and afterwards should help in harvesting the wheat crop and then paying them for their labor. Therefore we should inform your Majesty that said harvests are being lost, as there is not enough labor to help pick them...³⁶⁵

The judge in the case ordered that María de las Casas be fined 200 pesos so that she does "not force the Indians to work."

Despite the Tlaxcalans' difficult existence, their repeated appeals to Spanish officials gave them greater protection from local abuses than other northern indigenous groups. The Spanish saw those communities as an enemy that needed to be either incorporated or eliminated as they stood in the way of the colonization process. In fact, the enslavement of nomadic peoples may have continued until the eighteenth century. In his study of Indian slavery Jose Cuélllo notes that, "the widespread use of slavery was a systematic Spanish adaptation on the north Mexican frontier wherever nomadic Indians were encountered."³⁶⁶

Cuélllo writes,

³⁶⁵ "El General don Juan Antonio de Sarris y Ayarra Juez Visitador Real de las provincias de esta Villa del Saltillo y valle de Parras por Su Magestad con comisión particular del Señor Gobernador y Capitán General de este Reino para conocer de los Indios chichimecos que en ella hay y sentarlos y depositarlos en las partes donde más conviniere, y por cuanto lo que asentó el General don Agustín de Echeverz y Subiza se han retirado a diferente parte donde han sido amparados por doña María de las Casas de Cepeda y a Gonzalo López Berlanga para que se trujiesen dichos Indios en el molino de pan de Bernardino Sánchez para desde allí disponer acudan a la siega para alzar los trigos pagándoles su trabajo, y por cuanto se a representado a su merced se están perdiendo dichas cosechas y no hay gente en el valle con quien levantarlas y no haber cumplido los dichos doña María de las Casas, y Capitán Ambrosio de Cepeda y Gonzalo López de Berlanga lo que se les ha mandado." Auto del general Juan Antonio de Sarria para que doña María de las Casas no obique a trabajar a los indios, bajo multa de 200 pesos si lo hiciere. 1703" *Temas del Virreinato*, 142.

³⁶⁶ Jose Cuélllo, "The Persistence of Indian Slavery and Encomienda in the Northeast of Colonial Mexico, 1577-1723," *Journal of Social History* 21 (1988): 686.

Enslavement as a result of capture in a 'justified' war was considered a criminal sentence and was not permanent, although it might as well have been. Adult males were usually sentenced to twenty years of service under their captors. Women and teenagers usually received a sentence of ten or fifteen years. Children were 'deposited' with Spanish masters for indefinite periods. These temporary slaves could be sold to other Spaniards. A young adult male in 1575 was worth over 100 pesos. The average member of a band of hunter-gatherers was, therefore, worth about seventy-five pesos. When Sebastian de la Rocha received eighteen Indians as payment for his military services in 1575, he was essentially being paid 1,300 pesos. In 1592 Francisco de Urdiñola claimed that an Indian band he liberated as a gesture of peace was worth 3,000 pesos. He was referring to an extended family of forty people. Slave-hunting was a risk venture that could yield a significant amount of capital in a short period of time.³⁶⁷

Even when they were not officially enslaved, the offspring of Apaches captured in war were "given" to Spanish families who were supposed to raise them and help convert them. The 1777 Saltillo census documents that in the household of Antonio de la Mata y Cos, a Spanish merchant, resided Joseph María, an Apache boy who was thirteen or fourteen years old. Gertrudis Gómez, a Spanish widow, owned two mulatto slaves and a six-year old Apache boy named Agustin Phelix, who had "recently been converted" also resided in her home. In the census Apaches are not listed as "slaves" as the enslavement of indigenous people was an illegal practice.

A royal edict from the *Real Audiencia* of Guadalajara presented in Saltillo in 1672 ordered that the Chichimecas who worked against their will should be set

³⁶⁷ Cuélllo, "The Persistence of Indian Slavery," 687.

free. The governor of Nuevo León, Nicolas de Ascarraga, denied that Indian slavery existed. He writes,

...the governor stated that in all the time he had headed this government he has not allowed, or permitted, that said Chichimeca Indians be sold, even if they were captured in war. He has issued rigorous edicts regarding this, but because this land is surrounded by enemy Indians who refuse to obey his majesty and invade Spanish settlements killing them on travel paths and wherever they encounter each other. As is well-known and public in an effort to bring peace to the region there have been renewed efforts to conquer certain enemy nations by force. And because they are many and we have compassion towards them, instead of killing them they have been taken to the Real de Minas, without selling them, but only so they will pay for their crimes thus following his majesty's laws. The same treatment is given to Spaniards, mulattos, mestizos, and other people who commit crimes, such as have been committed by the three Pelones [Indians] who were sent to the Villa of Saltillo, of which regards this case, and they have once again been pardoned, they have continued to rob the horse and mule trains and have gone out to the travel paths and have shot arrows at those who travel them. I will not touch his majesty's jurisdiction.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ "...dixo el [governador] que en todo el tiempo que a estado en este gobierno no a consentido, ni permitido, que se vendan los dichos indios chichimecas, aunque se an havidos en la guerra, de que a publicado autos rigurosos, en esta razon, y que hallandose como se a hallado la tierran tan cercada de indios enemigos negandola obediencia a su magestad y haziendo invasiones en las poblazones de los españoles matandoles en los caminos y en las partes donde los topan, como consta de publica y notoria y notorio y de causas pendientes en esta razon atendiendo alla quietud publica y a la conservacion de este reyno y de los demas, se a puesto todo de nuebo en conquistar algunas naciones, a fuersa de armas de dichos indios enemigos=y por ser muchos y tener compasion de ellos en razon de quitarles la vida se les a remunerado en sacarlos fuera a algunos reales de minas depositados por sus annos, mas o menos sin que conste de venta, sino solo para compensar su delito guardando en esta las leyes de su magestad pues la misma sucede a los españoles, mulatos, mestizos, y otras personas que cometen delitos como ha hecho los tres que embiaron en deposito a la dicha villa del Saltillo de nacion Pelones de que esta hecha causa contra ellos, y nuevamente perdonados, an buelto a persistir en sus robos ordinarios de cavalladas muladas y salir a los caminos a flechar los que passan, que no la remito por no tocar a su jurisdicción de vuestra merced (V.M.)" Valdés and del Bosque, *Los tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 112-113.

Although the governor distinguished between forcing "criminals" to work without pay and slavery, there is evidence to suggest that Indians, whether or not they were officially called slaves, were sold at public auction in Nuevo León as late as 1652.³⁶⁹

Tlaxcalans therefore had ample reason to insist on their distinctive status as conquerors. They were not "Indios laboríos" and consequently had the right to be paid for their labor because of their different colonial status. In one 1669 petition to the king they complained that the Franciscans were forcing them work, but were not paying them for their labor. Royal officials responded by reminding the local clergy of previous edicts that, "...prohibit doctrinal ministers from forcing the natives or from giving the priests people to perform their personal services, or forcing them to give food rations or imposing any other thing on them."³⁷⁰ Authorities cited a 1664 order regarding the Tlaxcalans,

...I declare that they are not slaves but my free vassals, and because of their poverty, obedience, and peaceful nature, they are worthy of my royal protection...So there are not to be *repartimiento de Indios* nor will they need to pay for any rights, pay lawmakers, clerics or for taxes...that said Indians will not be obliged to serve convents or give food supplies, or pay tribute, or be servants at any time, but if said religious should pay for their services and the Indians give it freely, for money, and as long as they know they are not obliged to give it, only in that way will it be allowed..³⁷¹

³⁶⁹ Cuello, "The Persistence of Indian Slavery," 688, Eugenio del Hoyo

³⁷⁰ "...prohibe a los Ministros de doctrina obligar a los naturales y darles gente para su servicio personal, a exigirles ración de comida ni cualquier otra imposición." Valdes, 52-53.

³⁷¹ "...yo declarado no son esclavos sino vasallos míos libres que por su miseria, obediencia, y sosiego son dignos sumamente de mi real amparo...que no se agan repartimientos de indios ni paguen derechos algunos, a doctrineros clerigos ni aranzeles...que los indios no han de ser

Several scholars of northern indigenous communities discuss the influence that labor relations had on the development of indigenous ethnic identity. Susan Deeds seeks to analyze how demographic pressures and labor demands influenced indigenous communities of Nueva Vizcaya. She is primarily interested in knowing why some indigenous groups retained their ethnic identity and others did not. She concludes that indigenous groups, like the Acaxes and Xiximes, although more sedentary, were not able to survive because they were one of the first who came into contact with the Spaniards and were thus affected by disease and racial mixing with Spaniards. The Conchos in turn fell victim to the Spaniards' divide and conquer strategy, despite of the fact that they developed cultural ways to deal with Spanish colonialism. These groups fell victim to disease and heavy labor demands. The Tepehuanes and Tarahumaras were able to survive. Susan Deeds argues that this was primarily due to the fact they fled to frontier areas that were less occupied by Spaniards, which thus offered them the opportunity to maintain an ethnic identity.³⁷² In contrast to Deeds, Ana María Alonso notes that, "On the Chihuahuan frontier in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ethnicity did not become the primary basis for the division of labor; rather, the logic that opposed the 'civilized' to the 'savage' was a product of the

obligados a servir los conventos ni acudir con los bastamientos como se a entendido ha de cargar tributos ni serbidumbres en ningun tiempo pero si los dichos religiosos se los pagaren y los indios de su voluntad, por el dinero, y de gracia sabiendo ellos que no tienen obligacion a darselos no obstante se los dieran esto solamente se les permitira y no de otra manera." Valdés and del Bosque, *Los tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 58.

imperative of territorial conquest and domination."³⁷³ Alonso's analysis more closely approximates how the Tlaxcalans were viewed and treated. It is my contention that the Tlaxcalans' place within the northern colonial order was not primarily predicated by labor relations. As we have seen, cultural ideology also shaped Tlaxalan identity

The residents of San Esteban therefore saw themselves and insisted on their status as Christian conquerors. This distinction was necessary if they wanted to avoid being treated as the conquered, "uncivilized," and nomadic groups. The difference between conqueror and colonized subject was not a minor cultural difference. By distinguishing themselves as conquerors, Tlaxcalan communities in the north hoped to protect themselves from the violence that was wielded against nomadic groups. Their efforts were somewhat successful, as they were not forced to leave their homes to labor as the Chichimecas did, yet they did perform tasks by order of their *capitán protector* or governor. As late as 1740 the governor of Nueva Vizcaya once again issued a statement that fell short of outlawing the forced labor of northern Indians, but did state that Indians in the north should not be distributed and forced to work unless written consent was given and "those who were currently harvesting wheat should continue their work

³⁷²

³⁷³ Ana María Alonso, *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995): 70.

until the crop is picked."³⁷⁴ The town council of Saltillo, who received the statement, responded by saying that

...there were no other Indian pueblos in the area except for San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala and said inhabitants did not customarily perform personal services, unless they were sent by their *capitán protector* or governor to do some shearing. The judges of Saltillo did not have jurisdiction over them as said Tlaxcalans only recognize your Excellency and the Viceroy.³⁷⁵

Tlaxcalans at times could not protect themselves by arguing that they were distinct and should not be treated as other Indians that inhabited the region. In a case taking place in 1755 the governor of Nueva Vizcaya, Mateo Antonio de Mendoza, issued an edict prohibiting indigenous people from leaving their towns without an official permit or passport. He enacted this law because "many of the Indians from the *pueblos reducidos*, *doctrinas*, and missions under the government's control are carousing, creating havoc, robbing and generally harming their neighbors and travelers alike, as well as the hacendados."³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴ "...Mando a todas las Justicias y Gobernadores de los Pueblos de esta Gobernación no den a persona alguna Indios sin expreso mandamiento que para ello se libre, ni permitan que a los Gobernadores ni otras personas obsequien con el trabajo de dichos Indios por sus particulares intereses, y los que hallaran estar sirviendo sin mandamiento los retiren y recojan a sus pueblos excepto los que actualmente estuvieren en el corte de trigo que por no perjudicar a las labores se continúen hasta que alzen la cosecha..." Decreto para que no se hagan repartimiento de indios ni se obligue a trabajar contra todo derecho. 1740. Temas del Virreinato, 143-145.

³⁷⁵ "...en esta Jurisdicción no hay más pueblos de Indios que el de San Esteban de Tlaxcala y que sus Naturales no acostumbran salir a ningunos servicios personales sino es a algunas trasquilas enviados por su protector y su Gobernador por no tener incumbencia con ellos los Jueces de esta Villa mediante a que sólo reconocen a su Excelencia el excelentísimo Señor Virrey de estos reinos." Temas del Virreinato, 145.

³⁷⁶ "...teniendo reconocido y practicamente experimentado, que de tiempos a esta partes y muchos de los yndios de los pueblos reducidos, doctrinas, y misiones de este gobierno divertidos y derramados, causando robos y perjuicios a los vecinos y andantes y hacendados sin que aya sido

According to the governor he had not been able to contain this behavior by official means and now was compelled to enact such a proclamation further restricting the movement of the indigenous population. In addition, he complained that the pacified Indians had mixed with the “idolatrous and apostate frontier Indians” and have in turn "contributed to the disorder in the region."³⁷⁷ Therefore, this edict was designed to stop any indigenous person from leaving their townships without the express permission of the residing priest, town’s leader or an appropriate justice from each jurisdiction. If any Indian was found outside of their community without the appropriate documents they could be apprehended by any Spaniard or *mestizo*, jailed and tried for the offense. Moving around the region without a permit was to be defined as an act of rebellion against the king and as such, said Indian could be given the death penalty.³⁷⁸ The governor informed local authorities that their local or mission priests, as well as indigenous governors, were supposed to be duly informed of this edict, so that indigenous communities could not claim to be ignorant of this new law. In addition, he ordered that the *corregidor*, justices or those in charge of each community should develop a list of the names of all of the individuals

posible reducirse y quietarse por medio de los oficios que han ynterpuesto sus ministros doctrineros...” January 11, 1755, AMS, PM, C20, e26.

³⁷⁷ “...muchos de los tales yndios amistados y mezclados con los ymediatos fronterisos gentiles y apostatas, concurren, y an estado concurriendo y estan perjudicando los lugares fronterizos...” Jan. 11, 1755, AMS, PM, C20, e26.

³⁷⁸ “...seran castigados conforme corresponda a el yndicio averiguacion y causa que se seguira y formara a cada particular de dichos yndios que contravengan a esta determinación; y assi mismo bajo la pena y aperebimiento de que siendo requeridos por el español y españoles y demas en el

residing in the town, including the children, within 30 days. If this was not done, they would be given a two hundred peso fine. The money collected would then be used to defray the costs of the war against the Indians.

The 1755 edict by the governor of Nueva Vizcaya brought up difficult issues for the Tlaxcalans, as they were not considered apostate or warlike Indians. In fact, they were recruited to fight the war and otherwise bring “civilization” to the northern nomadic indigenous population. In April of that year the town council of Saltillo responded to the governor’s edict and explained that there were no *reducciones* in their vicinity and that their town was composed of Spaniards. The only Indians were the ones who resided in San Esteban de Tlaxcala. The mayor said that he would try to abide by the governor’s orders and told the lieutenant protector of San Esteban, Juan Francisco de Aguero y Campuzano, to publicize the governor’s edict and to make a list of all of the residents of San Esteban. The Tlaxcalans did not feel that they needed or should be expected to abide by such a law and therefore felt compelled to explain their situation to the governor. In their response to the governor they stated:

...without contradicting the superior mandates of Your Honor (señoría), the governor and the capitan general of Nueva Vizcaya there are already royal edicts from the King (may God protect him) in which he confers privileges and exemptions that we should enjoy as legitimate Tlaxcalans who were original founders and conquerors of this kingdom...In these royal edicts it was decreed that [Tlaxcalans] could travel to different places in this kingdom

caso de resistencia y en los parajes en que sean encontrados les daran y podran la muerte, como enemigos reveldes a la obediencia del rey nuestro señor...” Jan. 11, 1755, AMS, PM, C20, e26.

utilizing a riding horse, saddle and restraint and with defensive and offensive weapons and can carry such arms required as they are conquerors without carrying a pass or license from the supervising curate who administers them because they have never been detained by your Majesty's justices and likewise in the Villa de Saltillo and the jurisdiction of the Nuevo Reyno de León and the province of Coahuila...³⁷⁹

The Tlaxcalans then pointed out all of the services they had provided to the crown, including the establishment of other Tlaxcalan communities in Nuevo León and Coahuila. This included Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Candela, Boca de Leones, Calle de Pilos, and Santa María de las Parras. The residents of San Esteban argued that they had never been required to make a list of all their residents because they were,

...exempt from the jurisdiction of the Villa [Saltillo] and the governor of this kingdom and did not have in mind to (indivirlos) include with the catechized and disorderly Indians like they do in other towns of under this government where there are members of many nations... we therefore ask and plead that you maintain our privileges and exemptions that were enjoyed and are enjoyed as they are stated in the edicts created by his Majesty where he confers upon us the same ones enjoyed by the community's leaders and Tlaxcalans in general of the noblest city of the great Tlaxcala

³⁷⁹ "...sin contravertir los superiores mandatos de su señoría del señor gobernador y capitán general de este reyno de la Nueva Vizcaya se halla con varias reales zedulas del rey nuestro señor (que Dios guarde) en las que les confiere los privilegios y exempciones que deven gozr y gozan como tales lexitimos Tlaxcaltecas fundadores pobladores y conquistadores de este reyno a que se agregan otros que tienen ganancias de los exelenticimos señores virreyes de esta Nueva España; atento a lo qual y de que en qualquiera tipo que se les pida haran dichas reales zedulas en las que contienen puedan salir distintas partes, de este reyno o fuera de el en caballos ensillados y enfrenados y con las armas ofencivas y defencivas que puedan cargar como tales conquistadores sin que para esto necesiten llevar voleta ni licencia del reverendo padre cura que los administra ni de otro juez de este dicho pueblo para trancitar los caminos porque nunca se ha dado el caso sean ympedidos por ningunas de las justicias de su majestad y que assi mismo es constante a la villa del Saltillo y su jurisdicion al Nuevo Reyno de Leon y provincia de Coahuila..." April 2, 1755, AMS, PM, C20, e26.

where we descend from and we also remind you as it is public knowledge that this town has never excused itself from fighting against the invasions of the enemy Indians with the assistance and use of the military which is most efficient as it is recorded in the certification that is housed in this archive that is maintained since its establishment and as we have a competent cavalry at our disposal, which today exists for just these emergencies of war which has taken place without any intermission with the secure enjoyment of exemptions and other privileges that such acts deserve.³⁸⁰

The Tlaxcalans were not able to avoid the governor's edict and local officials apparently carried out his wishes.

Noble Tlaxcaltecos

One of the boundary markers used by the Tlaxcalans to identify themselves as different from other groups was to emphasize their status as nobles or *hidalgos*.³⁸¹ Prominent among the privileges that Tlaxcalans demanded from local authorities was acknowledgement that they were *hidalgos*. It is difficult to understand exactly what this meant in practical terms. In 1563 the Tlaxcalans had

³⁸⁰ "...por estar exemptos de la jurisdizion de la villa y no ser la mente del señor governador y capitan general de este reino indivirlos con los yndios catequisados y desarreglados como se versa en los demas pueblos de esta governazion en don de ay de todas naciones...piden y suplican se les guarde los privilexios y exempciones que deven gozar y gozan como esta declarado por zedula de su magestad en que nos confiere los mismos que gozan los casiques y tlaxcaltecos de la noblissima ciudad de la gran Tlaxcala donde descende este pueblo como tambien hazen patente por ser publico que a este pueblo ninca se ha escusado de salir a las ynbaciones de los yndios enemigos con la asistencia y exercicio militar con el empeño mas eficaz como consta en la zertificaciones que paran en este archivo manteniendo desde su fundacion un zituado de caballada competente a su consta, que oy existe para las precisas urgencias de guerra a que han concurrido sin intermicion alguna con el seguro de gozar su fuero y demas privilegios que a semejantes actos corresponde." April 2, 1755, AMS, PM, C20, e26.

³⁸¹ During the colonial period the Tlaxcalans of Mexquitic, SLP also commonly invoked their status as nobles in order to protect their rights. David Frye, *Indians Into Mexicans*, 50.

fought and won recognition from the king as a "Muy Noble y Muy Leal" city.³⁸² Did this noble status apply to the city of Tlaxcala as whole? Charles Gibson notes that post-conquest Tlaxcalan society retained much of its pre-conquest social organization. *Maceguales* continued to form the bulk of the Tlaxcalan population and "members of the hereditary nobility, without completely abandoning the *tecuhтли* institution, now adopted a Spanish title, *principales*." When *maceguales* tried to assume the title of a *principal*, they were soon put in their place by the town council.³⁸³ There is no indication that Tlaxcalan society in the north was in any way egalitarian. Note the fact that in a previously cited letter from the council of Saltillo they point out that the governor of San Esteban sent their people to perform certain labor.³⁸⁴ Consequently, the Tlaxcalan council of San Esteban seems to have reinterpreted privileges given to Tlaxcalan in central New Spain to best fit their needs. They fought to retain or reestablish this "noble status" and used documents from Tlaxcala, which stated that Tlaxcala was given noble status by the king, to support their claim that Tlaxcalans in general were nobles.³⁸⁵ For example, in two legal cases, one from 1729 and the other from

³⁸² Charles Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 166.

³⁸³ *Ibid*, 142-143.

³⁸⁴ *Temas del Virreinato*, 145.

³⁸⁵ In her study of Andean society Karen Spalding notes that indigenous leaders were given noble status and consequently used it to their own best benefit. She writes, "The kurakas of provinces, legally defined by the Spanish colonial regime as equivalent to European nobility and freed of sumptuary restrictions, adopted all the panoply of the European nobility. And though there is little evidence that the Europeans accepted their pretensions-save in the cases of some in the upper ranks of the Inca nobility of Cuzco-many were quite willing to build their fortunes on the basis of alliance with the Andean provincial elite, from whom they received lands and goods that could be

1782, the Tlaxcalans present very similar documents to support their claims. Although one was said to date back to 1591 and the other from 1629, their content was very similar. Both cases emerged from land disputes and discuss how the Tlaxcalans were to have *hidalgo* status in perpetuity. The 1629 one reads,

That all the Indians who were from the town and province of Tlaxcala and want to settle amongst the Chichimeca will themselves and their descendants be *hidalgos*, free of all tribute, taxes, or personal service,...that wherever they so settle they are not made to live amongst Spaniards but will live apart and if they reside ear each other that they live in separate neighborhoods and that Spaniards be prohibited from taking or buying land in a Tlaxcalan neighborhood.³⁸⁶

In one sense the terms *hidalgo* and noble were a shorthand way of saying that they were different than other groups and thus they had special rights to land, restricted tribute, etc. Residents of San Esteban also used the term in documents besides petitions when they needed to support their cases or rights. Given the fact that noble status appeared to be a meaningless title, Frederik Barth's idea regarding ethnic identity formation is especially meaningful, as this construction of the group's identity did not reflect an individual's reality. It was a way in which

used to build estates for themselves and their descendants." *Huarochiri: An Andean Society Under Inca and Spanish Rule* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984): 223.

³⁸⁶ "Que todos los Indios que así fueron de la Ciudad y Provincia de Tlaxcala a Poblar de nuevo con los dihcos Chichimecos sean ellos y sus descendientes perpetuamente Hidalgos libres de todo tributo, Pecho Alcabala y Servicio Personal, y en ningún Rigor alguno ni razón, se les pueda pedir ni llebar cosa alguna de esto, que donde hubiere de hacer sus asientos no les manden poblar juntamente con españoles sino distinto y de por sí de suerte que se pueblen cerca uno de otros sea con distinción de Barrio y prohibición a los Españoles que no puedan tomar ni comprar solar en el Barrio de tlaxcaltecas." Virreinato, 87. 1782, 1629.

Tlaxcalans (whether elite or commoner) could protect themselves and could distinguish between themselves from other indigenous or even mixed caste groups.

In these two marriage cases Tlaxcalans try to stop the marriage of their offspring by emphasizing the fact that they are *Tlaxcaltecas repúblicanos* (part of the Tlaxcalan republic) or noble Tlaxcalans. In 1798 the Alcalde of San Esteban, Don Josef Hernandez, tried to prohibit his daughter from marrying a man that he said was not of the same *calidad* as that of his family.³⁸⁷ He argued that Josef Manuel had many vices and was not fit to marry his daughter, Juana Jacoba. He asked that the court stop the marriage and give him back his daughter so that he could arrange for her to marry someone who was her equal. Don Josef asked for justice under the law of the Royal Marriage Pragmatic, which prohibited unequal marriages if parental consent was not given.

Don Josef, who said he was a "Tlaxcalteca vesino Republicano," argued that the man in question had stolen his daughter from his house and had taken her to the church- and for this he should be punished. In addition, Josef Manuel claimed this man was incapable of taking on the responsibilities of marriage and would only deceive his daughter and discredit his name. Don Josef said he would provide witnesses who would support his case. We are unaware of how this episode was eventually resolved, as the last official response asked that Don Josef

³⁸⁷ 1798, Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, Presidencia Municipal, c50, e39, 6f.

Manuel present these witnesses so that they could substantiate his claim that this was an unequal match.

In a 1799 marriage dispute case involving Tlaxcalans from San Esteban, Don Josef Joaquin Ramos appeared before the court in Saltillo to stop his son from marrying María Josefa Bueno.³⁸⁸ He argued that María Bueno had pleaded with his son and he had agreed to marry her because of his "fragility" and "torpidity." Don Josef and the bride's father, Euxeño Bueno, followed the couple to Monterrey, where the two had been jailed. Don Josef paid the three pesos and one *real* to get his son out of jail and Euxeño Bueno did the same for his daughter. Everyone then returned to Saltillo, where Euxeño insisted that Juan Calisto had to marry his daughter.

Don Josef consequently presented a list of arguments for why the marriage should not take place. First of all, Don Josef stated, his son never promised to marry María Josefa, she had taken him to Monterrey. She really only wanted to go to Monterrey to attend *fiestas*. Juan Calisto was only induced to go because he was weak. Don Josef thus continued to attack the girl's morals and stated that she had in fact left for the Valley of San Pedro with another man and his son had followed them. Said Don Josef, "if he had not followed her she would have left for Monterrey with that other man."

³⁸⁸ 1799, AMS, PM, c50, e40.

Secondly, María Josefa made previous agreements to marry both his nephew and his first cousin, even before committing to marry his son. Don Josef said that she had already confessed to this fact. He argued that María Josefa had displayed poor judgement and a lack of honesty. In addition, his son could not marry her without his consent- even if Juan Calisto had agreed to marry her. He could not be obliged to keep his promise if he was not given parental consent.

Finally, he argued, Tlaxcalans had to be protected and shielded by all justices as their sovereign leader (the king) had thus decreed this to be so. They were Tlaxcalans and consequently were also reputed to be nobles and as such the court should not permit his son to marry this woman, as previous rights given to the Tlaxcalans by the king would have to be discarded. As a loyal minister, Don Josef said, you must support and protect us in this matter.

The judge responded by saying that the case presented by Don Josef Joaquin Ramos, "Indio Principal del Pueblo de Tlaxcala," had merit. The couple would not be allowed to marry and María Josefa Bueno would instead be paid six pesos. These cases might be extreme examples of elite Tlaxcalans perhaps trying to keep land from being divided amongst outside members of the community. Yet, they are telling episodes because they show that certain members of San Esteban wanted to limit membership in their self-defined community. In addition, as we will see in the following chapter, it appears that Tlaxcalans in general did not see marriage with outside members of the group in a favorable light.

Although few Tlaxcalans married in the church, there is no record of a marriage of a Tlaxcalan to an outsider in the late colonial parish registry.

Conclusion

The residents of San Esteban were able to protect some of their privileges by adhering to the notion that they had noble status. This identity was born out of the social circumstances they faced in the north during the late colonial period. Moreover, the Tlaxcalans' behavior ultimately both challenged and helped facilitate Spanish colonial rule, as they bought into Spanish notions of race and status. Thus, the Tlaxcalans ultimately supported this society's racial hierarchy.

CHAPTER 7

Life in the Community of San Esteban

However flawed the records for the parish of San Esteban might be they do provide valuable information about this community during the colonial period. It is through this data that we can develop a more complex understanding of the life and activities of the everyday Tlaxcalan. Whereas most other written records previously utilized in this study were prepared by the San Esteban town council, baptismal, marriage, and burial records provide one of the only ways to comprehend the lives of individual Tlaxcalans and the broad social changes experienced by the whole community of San Esteban. These records indicate that Tlaxcalans rarely, if ever, married outside of the group, this supports the notion that they saw themselves as a distinct ethnic group. Yet, this did not mean that Tlaxcalans did not develop social relationships with outsiders. *Compadrazgo* ties with the residents of Saltillo were in fact not uncommon.

Baptismal and burial registries are not records of births and deaths; they are documents that must be deconstructed. Because Tlaxcalans did not allow a census of their community to be taken in the colonial period, demographic

information must be pieced together through other sources.³⁸⁹ Colonial parish records therefore provide the most complete demographic information. Yet, these documents are oftentimes inconsistent and incomplete. Tlaxcalans seemed very concerned with baptizing their newborns, but not so much in getting married through the church or in being buried in the church cemetery. Consequently, burial records provide telling information about disease and epidemics that affected the community as a whole and information about an individual's age at death and neighborhood of residence, but these statistics vary widely from year to year. In addition, most Tlaxcalans requested a "high" burial, thus indicating either that many were doing well enough to afford such a funeral, they were exempted from paying for these dues, or that the Tlaxcalans had a very effective *cofradía* system.

Baptismal Records

San Esteban's baptismal records provide several types of information—such as the date of the child's baptism, the child's name, whether or not they were legitimate, their parents' names, their neighborhood, the godparent's names, and

³⁸⁹ Leslie Offutt mentions a *padrón* in San Esteban of her work, but extensive research in the archives of Saltillo has not produced this census. David B. Adams also mentions the existence of such documents in, "Borderland Communities in Conflict: Saltillo, San Esteban, and the Struggle for Municipal Autonomy, 1591-1838," *Locus* 6:1 (1993): 44. Archivists in Saltillo claim that although colonial authorities asked that a census of the town be taken, the residents of San Esteban were adamantly against it as they feared that this would be a first step towards taxation or that

their neighborhood or town of origin.³⁹⁰ Therefore, a record would tell us that María Antonia was born in January of 1770, the legitimate daughter of Salvador and María Elena de la Cruz. The family resided in the neighborhood of Concepción (in San Esteban) and the child's godmother was Gertrudis Yanza from the Villa of Saltillo. As in Saltillo, at times newborns would be left at the doorsteps of the church or a private residence. In those instances the child was listed as being *expuesto/a*. If these children lived, they were apparently "adopted" by members of the Tlaxcalan community and were also baptized and had godparents like other children. One such case was that of Blas María, who was left at the doorsteps of Juan Antonio de la Cruz who baptized him in February of 1770. Juan Antonio resided in the San Esteban neighborhood of La Purificación. The child's godmother was Doña Anna María de Yurire, who was from Saltillo.

tribute would be demanded from the town. San Esteban was apparently able to thwart attempts by officials to take a census of the town.

³⁹⁰ Microfilm of birth, marriage and death records for the town of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala were consulted at the Family History Center, Mormon Archives, Austin, Texas.

Table 29: Baptisms, San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, 1770-1771 (both years)

CHILD	PADRINO'S NEIGHBORHOOD								
	CA	CO	PUR	SE	SA	SB	Villa	other	total
Candelaria	3 20%	2 13%		3 20%	4 27%		2 13%	1 6%	15
Concepción	4 8%	9 18%	1 2%	9 18%	8 16%	3 6%	12 24%	4 8%	50
La Purificación		2	14 39%	3	9 25%	2	6 17%		36
San Esteban	1 2.3%	2 4.5%	3 7%	5 11%	9 20%		13 30%	11 25%	44
Santa Ana	3 5.5%	6 11%	3 5.5%	3 5.5%	19 35%	8 15%	9 17%	3 5.5%	54
Santa Barbara		1 6%	4 24%	2 12%	2 12%	6 35%	1 6%	1 6%	17
Expuesta/o	1			1					
total	9	20	25	20	66	19	41	19	216

During the two years of 1770-71 there were 216 children baptized in the parish (see table 29). Sixty-eight percent of those children were born in the San Esteban neighborhoods of Concepción, San Esteban and Santa Ana. It appears that godparents from Santa Ana were chosen with greater frequency than other neighborhoods. In fact, thirty percent of the *padrinos* during those years came from that barrio. One might imagine that most godparents would reside in the same neighborhood of the child's parents. This was the case for the neighborhood of La Purificación (who chose godparents from their own neighborhood 39% of the time), Santa Ana (chose godparents from their own neighborhood 35% of the time), and San Buenaventura (who also chose godparents from their same

neighborhood 35% of the time). The parents from the barrios of San Esteban and Concepción tended to favor *padrinos* from Saltillo (San Esteban chose godparents from Saltillo 30% of the time and those from Concepción chose residents of Saltillo 24% of the time). The three most popular neighborhoods for godparents were Santa Ana (30%), Saltillo (18.7%), and La Purificación (11.4%). Although there is no numerical data regarding the size of each neighborhood, it appears that Santa Ana was the largest of these, as they baptized the most children in the years 1770-71, 1780, 1790, and 1800. Choosing a godparent also helped solidify ties amongst families, neighborhoods, and communities. Perhaps the most well-off or preeminent members of San Esteban society resided in Santa Ana.

Table 30: Baptisms, San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, 1780

CHILD'S	PADRINO'S NEIGHBORHOOD								
	CA	CO	Español	SE	SA	SB	Villa	other	total
Candel.	2 14%	2 14%	1 7%	4 29%	1 7%	2 14%	2 14%		14
Conc.	1 6%	4 27%		1	3 20%	1 6%	5 33%		15
San Esteban	5 26%	1 5.3%	2 10%	3 16%	4 21%		3 16%	1 5.3%	19
Santa Ana	3 10%		1 3%	2 6.5%	15 48%	2 6.5%	7 23%	1 3%	31
Santa Barbara	1 14%				1 14%	1 14%	2 29%	2 29%	7
Total	12	7	4	10	24	6	19	4	86

The 1780 records show a more random distribution of godparent choices. Candelaria parents often chose *padrinos* from San Esteban (29% of the time);

those from Concepción favored *padrinos* from Saltillo (33% of the time), but chose amongst their own neighborhood almost as often (27% of the time). Parents from the neighborhood of San Esteban exhibit a slight preference for godparents from Candelaria (chosen 26% of the time), but they chose *padrinos* from other neighborhoods almost as often. Those from Santa Ana show a clear preference for godparents from their own neighborhood, as they picked godparents from Santa Ana 48% of the time. Their second preference was Saltillo (chosen 23% of the time). In 1780 residents of San Esteban still tended to choose godparents from the barrio of Santa Ana (28% of the time), but Saltillo came in a close second.

Table 31: Baptisms, San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, 1790

CHILD'S	PADRINO'S NEIGHBORHOOD								total
	CA	CO	PUR	SE	SA	SB	Villa	other	
Candel.	2 40%				1 20%		1 20%	1 20%	5
Conc.	1 8.3%	2 17%		1 8.3%		3 25%	4 33%	1 8.3%	12
Expuesto					4 67%	1 33%		1 33%	6
La Purificación	4 25%				2 12.5%	6 37.5%	4 25%		16
San Esteban	1 5.9%	3 17.6%	1 5.9%	3 17.6%	3 17.6%		6 35%		17
Santa Ana		3 14%	1 4.8%	1 4.8%	4 19%	2 9.5%	6 28.6%	4 19%	21
Santa Barbara	1 7.7%			1 7.7%	2 15%	2 15%	5 38%	2 15%	13
other			2		1			1	4
total	9	8	4	6	17	14	26	10	90

Table 32: Baptisms, San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, 1800

	PADRINO'S NEIGHBORHOOD								
CHILD'S	CA	CO	PUR	SE	SA	SB	Villa	other	total
Candel.	3	2			3	1	2	1	12
Conc.	4			5	3		1	1	14
La Purif.						1	1	3 ³⁹¹	5
San Esteban		3	2	3	5	2	4	2	21
Santa Ana	1			5	13	1	9	2 ³⁹²	31
Santa Barbara		2		2	6	3	2	3 ³⁹³	18
total	8	7	2	15	131	8	19	12	101

These numbers indicate that Tlaxcalans were not averse to choosing godparents from Saltillo in the late colonial period. In 1790 four out of the six neighborhoods in San Esteban chose godparents from Saltillo with greatest frequency. Given that in legal disputes and other sources Spanish and Tlaxcalan residents have an adversarial relationship, the fact that residents of San Esteban chose *padrinos* from Saltillo deserves further analysis. Although it would be worthwhile to conduct a long-term study of godparent choice amongst this indigenous community, at this time it was only possible to study the years 1777-1780. These years were chosen because there was a higher probability that the godparent's name would appear in the 1777 Saltillo census.

³⁹¹ Two of the padrino's neighborhoods were unlisted and the third came from La Tula.

³⁹² One of the padrino's neighborhood was unlisted and the other came from the Hazienda de Topo Chico.

³⁹³ Two of the *padrino's* neighborhoods were unlisted and the third came from Los Molinos.

The following table presents the total number of San Esteban children baptized during those four years and the number and percentage of those who had godparents from Saltillo.

Table 33: San Esteban Children with Godparents from the Villa of Saltillo, 1777-1780

	1777	1778	1779	1780
Total baptisms	96	100	87	108
Godparents from Saltillo	19 20%	24 24%	25 28.7%	19 17.6%

Most of these children's families either came from the neighborhoods of Santa Ana or San Esteban. During those four years 28 of the children that had godparents from Saltillo were from the barrio of Santa Ana, 22 were from San Esteban, 18 were from Concepción, 10 were from Candelaria, and 9 were from San Buenaventura.

Although eighty-seven children from San Esteban had godparents that came from Saltillo during the years 1777-80, only nineteen of these were identifiable in the 1777 census. The complete names of the heads of households appear in the *padrón*, consequently they dominate the group under analysis because they could be identified with some certainty. The following information,

although interesting, is ultimately speculative. Yet, it does provide some general information about the *compadrazgo* system that begs further analysis.

Most of the nineteen godparent couples that were analyzed were either married or related, although seemingly unrelated couples, widows, and single women also baptized Tlaxcalan children. Sometimes brothers and sisters served as godparents, like Don Joseph Gil, a single 28-year old Spanish merchant, and his sister, also single and 32. They were godparents to the child of Francisco and María Ines, from the neighborhood of Candelaria in September of 1777. Another example is that of Juan Salvador de Salas, a 48-year old Spanish blacksmith and his single, 17-year old daughter, Juana Margarita, who baptized Diego Fernando, son of Martin de los Santos and Andrea Augustina, who were from the barrio of Santa Ana, in 1779.

All but one of the nineteen godparent couples (most children had a godmother and godfather, but some only had one) from Saltillo were Spanish. The one exception was Xtobal Padilla, a 40-year old *coyote* and his 22-year old wife, María de Ynes, who also listed her race in the census as *coyota*. In the four years under study they were godparents to two Tlaxcalan children. In September of 1777 they baptized Joseph María, son of Andres Martínez and Juliana de los Santos from the barrio of Concepción. In May of 1780 they were the *padrinos* of María Dorotea, daughter of Doroteo Antonio and Juana de la Encarnación from Santa Ana. In late colonial Saltillo the racial classification of *coyote* appeared with greater frequency in the parish registries, even more so than the term *mestizo*. Given that late colonial society was becoming more racially mixed, it

appears that the term may have been used to denote someone of unknown mixed background. Therefore, term *coyote* was apparently used much like the term *mestizo* was in other areas or later times. The 1793 Saltillo census indicates that Spaniards rarely intermarried with other groups, but when Spanish males chose a woman of a different race the ones most often chosen were *coyotas* (see chapter 5). This would seem to indicate that *coyotes* were considered to be above most other social groups in the racial hierarchy of late colonial Saltillo. *Coyotes* in Saltillo also had skilled occupations and were not often servants, a line of work dominated by groups considered to be at the bottom of the social ladder, like Indians and mulattos.

Most godparents under study had skilled professions. As we have seen Spaniards in Saltillo dominated these occupations. The Spaniards' vocations include a merchant, tailor, silversmith, *obrajero*, and even *capitán protector* of San Esteban. This would seem to indicate that upper class Spaniards were not averse to being godparents to Tlaxcalan children. Joseph María Carrillo, a 35-year old Spaniard, who listed his occupation as merchant, was in fact godparent to two Tlaxcalan children in this four year period. Carrillo and his 30-year old wife, Juana Gertrudis Davila, baptized Onofre Antonio María in June of 1777. He was the son of Rogelio Sipriano and María Guadalupe from the neighborhood of San Esteban. Then in April of 1780 this same couple were the godparents of Juana Dorothea, daughter of Juan Nepomuceno Murilla and María Gertrudis Coronado, also from San Esteban. The Carrillo household included their 10-year old niece and two servants, María Rodríguez, a 40-year old widow whose race

was listed as Indian, her 10-year old daughter Phelipa, and a 25-year old single female, who was also listed as an Indian.

Although not all of the Spaniards were in the upper classes, most appear to have been comfortable or had skilled work. Besides the previously mentioned merchants there was also Ignacio de Velasco, a 36-year old Spanish silversmith and his wife Juana Sánchez, who was 34. They had four children and had an Indian servant in their household.³⁹⁴ Young Spanish couples also became godparents. For instance, Jose Bisente Sanchez was 24 years old and his wife was eighteen when they became godparents to Marcela de los Santos from the barrio of Santa Ana in February of 1778. Jose Bisente was a tailor, a skilled profession that one might think would be open to other groups. In fact, in the 1793 census there are seven tailors, two are Peninsulares and the other five are Creoles. [see Appendix]

Given the close contact between the *capitán protetor* and the Tlaxcalans, it is not surprising that he was godparent to two children, both in 1779. It would have been important for the stability of the township for the captain to develop social ties with the residents of San Esteban. Pedro Francisco de la Fuente, the 60-year old Spanish captain of San Esteban and his single, 26-year old daughter, María Josefa, were godparents to Pedro Ygnacio Polinario, son of Nicolas Ramon and Juana Francisca of the neighborhood of San Esteban. Then in June of 1779 Don Pedro Francisco and his 30-year old wife, Anna María de Alanis, were godparents to Trinidad Theodocia, daughter of Josepha de la Cruz. Josepha was

³⁹⁴ Spaniards dominated silversmith positions in the colonial period.

apparently unmarried, as there is no husband listed in the registry and her daughter is noted as being an *hija natural* (natural daughter) and not an *hija legítima* (legitimate daughter). The captain's household included four other offspring, clearly from his first marriage, two sons and two daughters, all single and between the ages of 15 and 28.

It was also not uncommon for single women or widows to become godmothers, but information about them is more difficult to acquire. These women were oftentimes household heads, so their last names were not included. It is worth noting that several of the *padrino* couples appeared to be unmarried or unrelated. These names were especially difficult to track in the 1777 census, once again because of the lack of last names for members of the household. One female head of the household who was traceable was Doña Emerenciana Lobo Guerrero. In fact, she was godmother to two Tlaxcalan children in 1778. Doña Emerenciana was a 60-year old single female. In her household resided two nieces, a 30-year old single woman named Theresa Lobo Guerrero, and 16-year old María Josefa, who was also single. There was also a 17-year old black servant named Gertrudes. In August of 1778 Doña Emerenciana was the godmother of Juan Urcino, son of Francisco Thomas and Pheliciana Encarnacion from Santa Ana. In November of that same year she baptized Anna María, daughter of Juan Casimiro and Anna María, also from the neighborhood of Santa Ana. Although other women usually "partnered" with a male (when they were not wives or daughters) Doña Emerenciana was the lone godparent to these children.

It is interesting that Tlaxalans would want to create these social bonds with Spaniards. After all, much of their history in the late colonial period involved a struggle to keep Spaniards, *castas*, and other indigenous groups out of their community. Given the lack of materials to directly assess an individual's thoughts about this issue, the most obvious explanation would be that the close proximity between the two towns inevitably led to the development of personal relationships that were solidified through *compadrazgo*. Tlaxcalans may not have intermarried with other groups, yet it was impractical for them to ignore reality—that the social bonds developed between individuals were what maintained the colonial system. Given the small size of this indigenous community (in comparison to that of Saltillo and other nearby Spanish townships) Tlaxcalans developed ties that would in time help them and the group. In turn, Spaniards might have chosen to enter into these social relationships because it helped them control this indigenous community.

Several authors have previously discussed the existence of *compadrazgo* ties between Spanish and indigenous people in colonial society.³⁹⁵ Douglas Cope notes that other groups had bitter feelings about this "unnatural alliance" between Spaniard and Indian. Cope argues that these relationships were a way for Spaniards to recruit indigenous workers and servants.³⁹⁶ Karen Spalding also proposes that Europeans might have conceded to serve as godparents to indigenous children because they had a certain sympathy for their workers and

³⁹⁵ Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-1720* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1994): 92-93; Karen Spalding, *Huarochiri: An Andean Society Under Inca and Spanish Rule* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984): 286.

³⁹⁶ Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination*, 92-93.

were willing to be godparents "as long as the Indians showed them the respect and submission due a superior from an inferior."³⁹⁷ In both these assessments the *compadrazgo* ties are viewed as an economic relationship entered by each party because both had something to gain from one another. Yet, Tlaxcalans did not work for Spaniards and were not their servants.³⁹⁸ In the case of San Esteban, *compadrazgo* may have served both a practical and a symbolic role. Tlaxcalans may have sought these alliances because it was a way in which they could protect their community. Yet, why would Spaniards and upper *casta* groups enter into such an arrangement? What would they have to gain if Tlaxcalans were not part of their labor force? Spaniards and *castas* also expected something from the relationships developed with Tlaxcalans, namely to be able to influence Tlaxalan leaders who would consequently help sway the community. *Compadrazgo* ties between Tlaxalans and outside members of the community may have been a way in which Spaniards could control the residents of San Esteban.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷ Karen Spalding, *Huarochiri*, 286.

³⁹⁸ I did not find documented instances where Tlaxcalans are said to have worked for Spaniards. Yet, David B. Adams writes, "Many landless Tlaxcalans, unable to support themselves and their families at home, worked as day laborers in Saltillo or on Creole-owned haciendas in the vicinity." In the adjoining footnote to this statement he notes that he found such information in the "Padrón de los habitantes de Saltillo" from 1790 and the "Padrón y Rezumen de las Almas que hai en este Jurisdicción de la Villa del Saltillo," of 1791. I did not consult either of these records, but did analyze the 1777 and 1793 census, which do not record instances when residents of San Esteban worked for Creoles or Spanish residents. "Borderland Communities in Conflict: Saltillo, San Esteban, and the Struggle for Municipal Autonomy, 1591-1838," *Locus* 6:1 (1993): 44.

³⁹⁹ Karen Spalding writes, "The mechanisms of social control in colonial society depended far more upon constant contact between European and Indian than upon any show of force. The front-line troops of the colonial system were not soldiers, but the people who spoke the language of the Indian people, who were willing to stand as godparents to their children or sponsors at their marriage, and who would do small favors for their ritual kinsmen-favors that generally proved to be to their own benefit. These people were often sympathetic to the Indians who worked for them and among whom they lived, as long as the Indians who worked for them and among whom they lived, as long as the Indians showed them the respect and submission due a superior from an inferior. The basic class division in the rural provinces was here, in the line drawn between Indian

The fact that indigenous and Spanish actors entered into *compadrazgo* ties tells us that this society was not fraught with constant tension and violence. In many ways, these types of social bonds were the glue that held the colonial system together. Both parties understood this. What would a *capitán protector* have to gain by being the godfather of the child of an unwed Tlaxcalan woman? It may have been a paternalistic act that was an extension of his role in the community, but there was no direct reward for serving in this capacity. Legal disputes and anger over the encroachment of land and resources in the late colonial period apparently could not break the bonds developed by individuals in this society.

Table 34: San Esteban Children with Godparents from Saltillo

	1790	1800	1810
Total # of Baptisms	97	106	166
Gadparents from Saltillo	26 26.8%	19 17.9%	45 27%

By 1810 there was a slight increase in the percentage of Tlaxcalan children who had godparents from Saltillo (see table above). Yet, at this time we see the appearance of both children and godparents who are neither from San Esteban nor from Saltillo. Some children's parents were from Boca de Leones,

and Spaniard. The line was maintained by the entire apparatus of Spanish colonial society, and as Francisco de Toledo had perceived more than 200 years earlier, the presence of the members of European society among the Indians not only did not threaten the system, but preserved it." Ibid, 286.

the Hacienda de Patos, the Pueblo of San Bernardo, Real de Catorce, San Luis Potosí, and even one couple from Saltillo. There were 45 godparents who were from Saltillo, but three were from Real de Catorce, there was one from San Miguel el Grande, and one other from San Luis Potosí. Although the evidence is inconclusive, it appears that there is greater movement of people within the colonies. Tlaxcalans may have left San Esteban to work in haciendas, mines, or larger cities like San Luis Potosí. At this time there is also an increase in the number of land sales in San Esteban.⁴⁰⁰ Historians also note that there was growing migration to areas like Mexico City at the end of the colonial period by indigenous and *casta* groups. Silvia Arrom found that in 1811, 38% of all females in Mexico City were born in outside areas. Of these migrants, 48% were indigenous women.⁴⁰¹ Greater economic opportunities in other areas or increasing local pressures appear to have influenced this possible out-migration. The Tlaxcalans allude to the fact that residents of San Esteban might be leaving the area in one of their letters. In a 1794 petition to the governor they argue that their possessions had been acknowledged and given to them by a royal edict and that, "land distributed to pueblos and demarcated borders should not be taken away or changed even if they are uninhabited..."⁴⁰²

⁴⁰⁰ See years 1801-1828. *Catálogo del Fondo de Testamentos, Tomo 1 y 2* (Saltillo: Ayuntamiento de Saltillo, 1997-1999).

⁴⁰¹ Silvia Arrom also found that there was a gender imbalance in Mexico City and argues that women were migrating into the city in large numbers, but that there were also a large number of men who were leaving. *The Women of Mexico City, 1790-1857* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985): 107-108. See also, Juan Javier Pescador, "Vanishing Woman: Female Migration and Ethnic Identity in Late-Colonial Mexico City," 42(1992): 617-626.

⁴⁰² "...y tan solamente solo nuestros amabilísimos Católicos Monarcas Reyes de Castilla encargan por sus reales cédulas que en todos los pueblos de la América que les señalaren o repartieren en las tierras y sus linderos nunca les puedan quitar en ningún tiempo por despoblados..." Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila, 312.

Marriage Records

Marriage records from the parish of San Esteban are especially sparse. Overall, they seem to indicate that the residents of San Esteban rarely (if ever) married outside of their group. Although few Tlaxcalans married in the church, it does appear that intermarriage between Tlaxcalans and outsiders in the late colonial period was rare. Indeed, there are no marriages with Tlaxcalans recorded in the 1777 Saltillo census.

There are many reasons why the residents of San Esteban would not want members of their community to marry outside of the group. One reason why they would look unfavorably on such marriages was that intermarriage would split land amongst outside members of the community. This was not a minor point, as Tlaxcalans were preoccupied with maintaining the ethnic group in order to protect their lands and economic well-being. It was a matter of survival. Another reason why Tlaxcalans might not have married outside the group was that in one sense, it was Spaniards who were their legal equals, yet the reality was that in eighteenth century colonial society Spaniard and Indian were not equal. In fact, during the late colonial period the status of indigenous people was even more tenuous. Marriage amongst these two groups would not have been an acceptable practice.

Table 35: Parish of San Esteban, Average Age at Marriage⁴⁰³

	Male	Female	# of marriages
1790	18.15	17.75	23
1800	23.45	16.95	25
1810	23.62	18.43	37

Sources indicate that in 1790 the oldest Tlaxcalan male was 43; his bride was 16 years old. The oldest female that year was 28 and her groom was 22. The youngest male was 20 and the youngest female was 15. In 1800 the oldest male was fifty; his bride was 16. The oldest female was 30 and her husband was also 30. The youngest male that year was 17 and the youngest female was 15. By 1810 there was barely a change in the male's average age at marriage. The oldest male that year was 45, and his bride was 36. The oldest female was 38; her new spouse was 26. The youngest male married that year was 16 and his bride was 15. There were five fourteen-year old females married that year. Four married men in their late teens or twenties, but one married a 40-year old. In 1810 we also see the marriage of outsiders in the church. A Tlaxcalan couple from the town of Tlaxala de San Luis Potosí married in the church and a Spanish bride and groom also said their vows in the traditionally Tlaxcalan parish.

⁴⁰³ Not all of the marriages included in this count may have been first marriages. It was common for Tlaxcalans (both male and female) to marry three or four times within their lifetimes.

Burial Records

Burial records for the parish of San Esteban reveal much about the town's history and the hardships Tlaxcalans faced. Mid-seventeenth century documents show that non-Tlaxcalan indigenous groups resided very near and most probably in the town of San Esteban, as they were buried within the parish. Registries from 1632-1650 show that Guachichiles and Chichimecas were laid to rest in San Esteban. Other groups like Otomí, Borrados, and Tarascans were also present at this time. There is no available evidence to suggest that these northern groups intermarried with Tlaxcalans, but this information does indicate that Tlaxcalans perhaps over-exaggerated the assertions made in land title documents where they claimed that no other group had ever lived amongst them. It does appear that Tlaxcalans were reacting to eighteenth century social pressures and consequently used this version of history to try and resist the encroachment of their land by outsiders.

Burial records also indicate that most Tlaxcalans received a high burial (or an *entierro mayor*). There were sixty-three burials in 1770 and only six individuals received a lower (*menor*) ceremony. Five out of the six individuals not given a high burial were *párbulos* or children under the age of 7. In 1780 there were 297 burials and 20 received a low burial. This trend is also evident in 1790 as only two people received a low burial out of the sixty-two that were buried in the church that year. Although further research on Tlaxcalan *cofradías* would help explain why most Tlaxcalans chose and could afford this type of religious service at the end of their lives, a cursory analysis of the records does

reveal that the residents of San Esteban faithfully contributed to their brotherhoods. Church papers record that regular payments were made by these orders, thus indicating that Tlaxcalans were united in support of this organization. It is unclear if Tlaxcalans had always shown united support for the *cofradías* or if members of the community had a renewed interest in these orders during the eighteenth century because of the hardships faced by the community at this time. Both reasons may have played a role in shaping their participation

Table 36: San Esteban, Burials, 1663-1770 (Parish records missing for the years 1711-1748)

Year	Burials	Year	Burials	Year	Burials	Year	Burials
1663	18	1681	8	1699		1755	48
1664	13	1682	7	1700		1756	18
1665	30	1683	5	1701		1757	25
1666	37	1684	21	1702		1758	45
1667	14	1685	9	1703		1759	21
1668	15	1686	8	1704		1760	15
1669	13	1687	10	1705		1761	18
1670	25	1688	17	1706		1762	197
1671	17	1689	17	1707		1763	95
1672	10	1690	20	1708		1764	136
1673	23	1691		1709		1765	21
1674	21	1692		1710		1766	60
1675	27	1693		1749	29	1767	47
1676	17	1694		1750	42	1768	75
1677	10	1695		1751	16	1769	180
1678	19	1696		1752	31		
1679	20	1697		1753	35		
1680	21	1698		1754	43		

Table 37: San Esteban, Burials, 1770-1806

Year	Burials	Year	Burials	Year	Burials	Year	Burials	Year	Burials
1770	63	1778	76	1786	126	1794	59	1802	103
1771	112	1779	15	1787	274	1795	75	1803	87
1772	55	1780	297	1788	34	1796	58	1804	142
1773	49	1781	77	1789	57	1797	61	1805	95
1774	54	1782	79	1790	67	1798	205	1806	72
1775	50	1783	71	1791	106	1799	57		
1776	63	1784	78	1792	110	1800	68		
1777	57	1785	191	1793	71	1801	137		

The year 1780 was disastrous for the residents of San Esteban. There were 108 baptisms (a typical year) and 297 deaths. Never before or after 1780 were so many people buried in the church cemetery. The culprit was the smallpox (*viruela*) epidemic. It attacked the weakest members of the community—children under the age of 12. Although there is a tendency for the residents of San Esteban to favor the burial of the young, it does make sense that those who had not developed an immunity to the disease through past exposure would fall victim to it. As Tlaxcalans did not faithfully bury their dead in the church cemetery, it was probably the case that the number of deaths was probably much higher.

The years 1785, 1786, and 1787 also had a spike in the number of burials. Smallpox does not appear to be the culprit in those instances. San Esteban was seemingly affected by the broader problems taking place in the rest of New Spain during the 1780s. Donald B. Cooper found the years 1784-87 were marked by a high number of deaths in Mexico City due to disease and famine.⁴⁰⁴ This was apparently due to a frost that ruined the crops in 1785 and consequently led to a sharp rise in the price of meat, wheat, and beans.⁴⁰⁵ These shortages and high food prices affected all of New Spain. Although the smallpox epidemic in 1780 had a devastating effect, bad crops and high prices had a more lasting effect, as

⁴⁰⁴ Donald B. Cooper, *Epidemic Disease in Mexico City, 1761-1813* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965).

⁴⁰⁵ Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 316.

deaths in San Esteban spiked for those three years (1785, 1786, and 1787) (see previous table).

Population Changes in San Esteban and Saltillo

The available evidence about Saltillo and San Esteban also suggests that population growth took place in both these towns. Yet, it was dramatically uneven. For instance, in the 1787 census the population of San Esteban was 1,904 and Saltillo's was 2,915 (these numbers do not include those residing in haciendas or ranches). In the 1793 census both their numbers increase, San Esteban's was estimated to be 3,500 and Saltillo's was 6,082.⁴⁰⁶ In the 1828 census San Esteban's population was 2,820. By 1829 Saltillo shows a dramatic increase in its population, which was now listed as being 19,047. By 1830 San Esteban's was 3,148 and Saltillo's was 20,241. The populations of Saltillo and San Esteban seem to continue the general trend established in the late colonial period. By 1828 the town of San Esteban had a population of 2,935 (actually 2,834, the numbers were not added correctly by the census taker). In 1829 San Esteban (now renamed Villa Longín) had a population of 3,024 and by 1830 it was 3,125. In 1830 Saltillo (now renamed Leona Vicario) had a population of 20,285.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ Leslie Offutt points out that these numbers appear to be inflated.

⁴⁰⁷ 1830, AMS, PM, c75, e17.

The changes occurring in the northeastern provinces therefore reflected the transformations that were taking place in New Spain as a whole. Magnus Mörner notes that there was a sharp rise in the population of New Spain in the eighteenth century. He found that the rise in the number of both "whites" and mixed groups strained Indian settlements, as this placed greater demands on land and resources that had previously been allotted to them.⁴⁰⁸ The following statistics from the early national period illustrate the unequal demographic development in San Esteban and Saltillo

Table 38: 1828 San Esteban Census

Ages	Single		Married		Widowed		Totals
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Under 7	289	258	0	0	0	0	547
7 to 16	151	173	8	10	0	2	344
16 to 25	62	44	277	187	2	2	574
25 to 40	3	9	250	445	20	23	750
40 to 50	5	5	247	152	5	28	442
Over 50	3	1	54	42	18	59	177
Totals	513	490	836	826	45	114	2834
Males: 1,394		Females: 1,430					

⁴⁰⁸ Magnus Mörner, *Estado, razas, y cambio social en Hispanoamérica* (Mexico: Secretaría de educación pública, 1974): 117.

Table 39: 1830 Villa Longín Census (formerly Pueblo of San Esteban)

Ages	Single		Married		Widowed		Totals
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Under 7	315	290	0	0	0	0	605
7 to 16	167	288	1	22	0	2	478
16 to 25	70	53	315	200	6	8	652
25 to 40	10	15	260	456	19	20	780
40 to 50	1	2	248	154	16	40	461
Over 50	0	0	51	43	20	58	172
Totals	562	646	627	721	45	86	3,148
Males: 1,234		Females: 1,453					

Table 40: 1829 Leona Vicario Census (formerly Saltillo)

Ages	Single		Married		Widowed		Totals
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Under 7	2,264	3,206	0	0	0	0	5,470
7 to 16	1,200	1,500	320	320	80	86	3,506
16 to 25	1,500	1,100	800	800	70	75	4,345
25 to 40	811	700	780	780	90	100	3,261
40 to 50	200	100	500	500	104	106	1,510
Over 50	80	60	302	302	68	143	955
Totals	6,055	6,666	2,702	2,702	412	510	19,047
Males: 9,169		Females: 9,878					

Table 41: 1830 Leona Vicario Census (formerly Saltillo)

Ages	Single		Married		Widowed		Totals
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Under 7	2,525	3,211	0	0	0	0	5,736
7 to 16	1,394	1,621	450	450	96	99	4,114
16 to 25	1,510	1,200	815	815	79	80	4,499
25 to 40	813	715	780	780	81	93	3,262
40 to 50	295	193	500	500	90	80	1,658
Over 50	85	71	300	300	70	150	976
Totals	6,622	7,011	2,845	2,845	416	502	20,241
Males: 9,883		Females: 10,358					

Population imbalance shaped how Tlaxcalans reacted to social changes and as a consequence it was virtually impossible for them to avoid contact with their neighbors in Saltillo. If this was the case, why were they involved in a constant struggle to keep outsiders out of their community? In those petitions they are clearly fighting to protect the community, not because they wanted to remain provincial or traditional, but because they want to protect themselves and their resources. Their behavior (as exemplified in *compadrazgo* records) indicates that they formed social bonds with the residents of Saltillo throughout the period under study. Their fight to retain their "traditional" space was a battle to protect themselves from negative outside change.

Moreover, these statistics cannot explain why the population of San Esteban did not keep pace with that of its mixed caste and Spanish neighbors. There might have been more Spanish and mixed groups migrating to the region, but census records do not list this type of information. The 1777 Saltillo census does list town of origin and in this case most people in the town seem to be from Saltillo or from nearby ranches or towns. The other possibility was that there was a rapid rise in fertility rates in the Spanish and mixed population.

Residents of San Esteban may have also decided to relocate to areas where they could find better jobs, perhaps regions like San Luis Potosí or the mining town of Real de Catorce.⁴⁰⁹ Juan Javier Pescador notes that by the second half of the eighteenth century more than 40% of the inhabitants of Mexico City were immigrants.⁴¹⁰

Saltillo experienced impressive growth, yet it was still a small town compared to other cities in central New Spain and its economic base was still primarily agricultural. Census data from the nineteenth century indicates that the socio-economic life of both San Esteban and Saltillo still appeared to be primarily tied to agriculture and ranching. The following tables indicate the occupational breakdown of San Esteban and Saltillo soon after independence.

⁴⁰⁹ Baptismal records for San Esteban rarely listed if ever listed the residential status of parents or godparents from areas outside of San Esteban before 1800, but in the early nineteenth century, outside areas, especially San Luis Potosí and Real de Catorce, were listed as place of origin with more frequency.

⁴¹⁰ Juan Javier Pescador. *De bautizados a fieles difuntos: Familia y mentalidades en una parroquia urbana, 1568-1820* (MexicoCity: El Colegio de México): 122.

Table 42: 1828 San Esteban Census-Occupations

Agricultural worker	297	lawyer	0
Artisan	72	scribe	0
Day laborer	209	state worker	0
Miner	0	(unreadable listing)	0
Mine worker	4	military	0
Muleteer	10	(unreadable listing)	0
Priest	1	merchant	25
Deputy	0	doctor	0
Ecclesiastic	0	surgeon	0
Regular orders	0	druggist	0
Students	2	barber/bleeder	4
School teacher	4		

Table 43: 1830 Villa Longín (formerly San Esteban) Census-Occupations

Agricultural worker	317	lawyer	0
Artisan	10	scribe	0
Day laborer	369	state worker	0
Miner	0	(unreadable listing)	0
Mine worker	6	military	0
Muleteer	9	(unreadable listing)	0
Priest	1	merchant	232
Deputy	0	doctor	0
Ecclesiastic	0	surgeon	0
Cleric	0	druggist	0
Regular orders	0	barber/bleeder	3
Student	1	school teacher	3

Table 44: 1829 Leona Vicario (formerly Saltillo) Census-Occupations

Agricultural worker	3,500	lawyer	10
Artisan	807	scribe	0
Day laborer	700	state worker	2
Miner	0	(unreadable listing)	5
Mine worker	20	military (retired)	3
Muleteer	200	(unreadable listing)	0
Priest	1	merchant	109
Deputy	2	doctor	2
Ecclesiastic	0	surgeon	0
Cleric	7	druggist	2
Regular orders	2	barber/bleeder	9
Student	14	school teacher	3

Table 45: 1830 Leona Vicario (formerly Saltillo) Census-Occupations

Agricultural worker	3,522	lawyer	8
Artisan	915	scribe	0
Day laborer	800	state worker	5
Miner	0	(unreadable listing)	5
Mine worker	20	military	6
Muleteer	405	(unreadable listing)	1
Priest	1	merchant	315
Deputy	2	doctor	1
Ecclesiastic	0	surgeon	0
Cleric	6	druggist	2
Regular orders	2	barber/bleeder	25
Student	11	school teacher	1

Conclusion

In, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages*, William Taylor writes that "village uprisings may have expressed a defiant isolationism in reaction to change imposed from the outside."⁴¹¹ Yet, he also acknowledges that "village independence was usually more of a fantasy than a reality."⁴¹² This was certainly the case for the residents of San Esteban. In petitions and legal disputes they are involved in a constant struggle to keep outsiders out of their town, but documentary evidence reveals that relations between Tlaxcalans and other groups was more complex. When the residents of San Esteban fought to remain "isolated" and to keep non-Tlaxcalans outside of their community, it does not appear they believed they might be able to limit all contact with outsiders. This was in fact impossible, given their proximity to Saltillo. As the population of Saltillo grew and colonial society became more race-conscious, Tlaxcalans and other indigenous people felt increasing pressures and thus reacted by reasserting social boundaries so that they could protect the self-defined group's rights and resources. It was a short-term strategy, designed to fit immediate needs, but it was a practical response that reflected their understanding of local culture and politics.

⁴¹¹ William Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979): 153.

Hence, Tlaxcalans may have chosen not to marry outside of the group, but they still interacted with the community of Saltillo. *Compadrazgo* records indicate that Tlaxcalans formed social bonds with residents of La Villa. In fact, it appears as if members of San Esteban most often chose residents of Saltillo to serve as godparents to their children in the latter years of the colonial period. For the residents of San Esteban, social contact (as exemplified through the *compadrazgo* system) served the practical purpose of solidifying what appeared to be a patron-client relationship. The existence of this contact did not mean that these were not unequal relations entered into by each group for self-interested reasons. Finally, it should be noted that studies of indigenous uprisings have perhaps over emphasized indigenous people's need for isolation within their villages because documentary evidence about these uprisings do indicate that indigenous people said they were fighting to keep outsiders out.⁴¹³ The goals expressed by leaders or members of the community in those moments of tension and violence reflect a distilled over-simplified version of the community's broader

⁴¹² William Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979): 27.

⁴¹³ Eric Van Young writes, "Certainly, the ringing of village church bells was important in its own right, often serving to call rural people to the defense of their pueblos during the rebellion or to mobilize them for the insurgent or royalist cause. Such ringing, however, was only the aural manifestation of a deeper projection of community into the outside world and ultimately of the impulse toward communal auto-projection of community into the outside world and ultimately of the impulse toward communal auto-defense that drove much of indigenous and more generally rural participation in the anticolonial insurgency." *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001): 484.

concerns. What they wanted to limit was abusive behavior and detrimental policies.

CHAPTER 8

Resistance and Adaptation

In recent years scholars have noted that there was an increase in the number of popular riots during the eighteenth century.⁴¹⁴ Although there were few widespread rebellions, there is evidence to suggest that communities collectively protested Bourbon policies, for example. It is through the study of such events that we are able to develop an understanding of popular culture and the forces that fomented popular rebellion. Although these riots only describe relatively brief moments in the history of indigenous communities, it is because much attention has been given to such outstanding events that we now know that many communities were dissatisfied with colonial reforms and that they came together to speak out against these changes. Yet, we are only now beginning to comprehend how the bulk of society, and especially indigenous people, were affected by the political, economic, and social changes that took place in the late

⁴¹⁴ I will use the terms riot, rebellion, insurrection, and insurgency movements in this chapter, but they are not interchangeable terms. William Taylor defines insurrection as "regional revolts, in which whole zones of rural people band together in a violent assault on state authority and privileged classes." In his terminology rebellion is also a violent act, but they are more localized mass actions, "generally limited to restoring a customary equilibrium" and "do not offer new ideas or a vision of a new society." *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages*, 113-115.

colonial period and how they interpreted such events.⁴¹⁵ Even though the Tlaxcalans of San Esteban expressed dismay over the changes they saw taking place around them and that apparently transformed their lives, there is scant evidence to support the notion that they rose up or planned to rise up violently against the colonial order. Despite of this, they did not sit idly by, but protested in ways that historically had best served their community and that were acceptable to colonial authorities. Northern Tlaxcalans used legal means and petitions to express their discontent but they also innovated by turning towards their original parent colony in Tlaxcala for help. Why did the Tlaxcalans in the north not rise up collectively to violently protest the changes that were taking place? Were they so apolitical that they had no consciousness of their place within the colonial order? Were they simply not as deeply affected as other indigenous communities? Is there a point when groups will no longer accept the imposition of governmental policies and will lash out? Through the study of Tlaxcalan letters, petitions, legal disputes, and criminal records this chapter will analyze San Esteban's response to late colonial policies and will analyze the political culture of

⁴¹⁵ In a discussion of eighteenth century rebellions in New Granada Anthony Mcfarlane writes, "To seek any general hypothesis that might explain the causes, frequency, and distribution of these disparate events would be premature. In many cases, the information provided by contemporary sources is very limited, and the uneven and inconsistent quality of the primary data makes it difficult fully to investigate and compare reported cases of civil disorder. The problems posed by the primary sources are compounded by the paucity of local and regional histories of New Granada. Until studies of the social, economic, and political life of the communities in which these disturbances occurred become available, it is impossible to comment with confidence on how common such disturbances were, or on their relationship to social and economic conditions.." "Civil Disorders and Popular Protests in Late Colonial New Granada," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 64:1 (1984): 44.

the Tlaxcalans in order to develop an understanding of why they acted as they did during what appeared to be a pivotal time in their history.

This chapter argues that the available evidence describes an indigenous community whose behavior was pro-Tlaxcalan, but not necessarily anti-colonial. Indeed, scholars have been too intent on finding anti-colonial projects as markers of political consciousness and have ignored the everyday ways communities chose to oppose policies they felt negatively affected their interests. In addition, those incidents where Tlaxcalans are accused of organizing against or speaking unfavorably of the colonial order seem to more accurately describe a fear amongst Spaniards and Creoles of indigenous rebellion and of any type of challenge to late colonial policies. This final chapter will also speculate as to the lack of indigenous rebellions at the end of the colonial period.

It should be noted that although we can learn much about indigenous societies by analyzing rebellions, a focus on such outstanding events might induce us to see indigenous people as continually defensive actors. Steve Stern argues that a more fruitful approach to the study of peasant rebellions is not to ask "why a politically dominant and traditionalist peasant mass suddenly became insurrectionary, but rather why, at specific moments, ongoing peasant resistance and self-defense increasingly took the form of collective violence against

established authority."⁴¹⁶ There are a variety of external and internal factors that shape a community's or group's response in times of crisis. It would be simplistic to point to one event that ultimately convinced them that this moment required violent action on their part. This final chapter hopes to shed light on how indigenous people chose to live their lives in the late colonial period.

The Bourbon Reforms and the Tlaxcalans' Response

Charles III ascended to the throne in 1759 and consequently tried to make "Spain a great power through state reform, imperial defense, and control of colonial resources."⁴¹⁷ What followed were a series of policies designed to maximize Spain's control of its colonies and increase colonial revenue. In 1767 the Jesuit order was expelled from the Americas, as part of a broader attack on Church power and wealth. New taxes were developed, Creole participation in colonial government was reduced and government was also centralized through the creation of new administrative units or *intendencias*.⁴¹⁸

One of the immediate changes that resulted because of the new Bourbon policies was the creation of the *Comandancia General de las Provincias Internas* in 1776. David Adams argues that this change did not dramatically affect the residents of San Esteban. The two administrative changes that did have an impact

⁴¹⁶ Steve Stern, ed. *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18th to 20th Centuries* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987): 9-10.

⁴¹⁷ John Lynch, *Bourbon Spain, 1700-1808* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989): 250.

⁴¹⁸ Lynch, *Bourbon Spain*, 329-374.

on Tlaxcalan society, he argues, were that the districts of Saltillo and Parras (which had been part of Nueva Vizcaya) became part of the province of Coahuila in 1787, thus bringing them closer to the jurisdictional center of Monclova, Coahuila. Also that year, the intendancy system was extended to Coahuila thus giving local agents of the intendancy greater power than district *alcaldes*. Adams writes,

Thus, the subdelegate at Saltillo was authorized to preside over meetings of Amerindian *cabildos* in his district, to audit their accounts, and to review their land titles. Previously, the *capitán protector* had discharged these duties. Under the intendancy system, San Esteban retained its protector, but he, in effect, became nothing more than a municipal attorney.⁴¹⁹

Whereas in earlier times the residents of San Esteban could choose to ignore the decrees enacted by a far off ruler, in the late eighteenth century they had a more difficult time keeping the colonial system from intruding in their lives as the government was suddenly much closer.

Even before these administrative changes took place in 1787 the Tlaxcalans expressed dismay over changing colonial policies. In August of 1781 the *cabildo* of San Esteban took the unusual step of contacting their parent colony in Tlaxcala to ask for their assistance with their current problems.⁴²⁰ This had not been done since 1758 when San Esteban had received correspondence from

⁴¹⁹ David B. Adams, "Borderland Communities in Conflict: Saltillo, San Esteban, and the Struggle for Municipal Autonomy, 1591-1838," *Locus* 6:1 (1993):48.

⁴²⁰ Miguel Lira y Ortega, *Colección de documentos para la historia de Tlaxcala y México* (Tlaxcala: Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala-FONAPAS, 1982): 193-199.

central Tlaxcala. According to the residents of San Esteban they had no other recourse but to contact the parent colony, as they "could only seek shelter from God, Our Father, and you." In this letter the northern Tlaxcalans outlined a variety of complaints. The first and apparently the most distressing was that the *comandante general* of the province of Nueva Vizcaya had notified them that from then on they would be under the jurisdiction of Nueva Vizcaya and not of New Spain, despite of the fact that the founding documents of the town stated that San Esteban would always be under the jurisdiction of the viceroy. On July of that year the *comandante* showed them a letter stating that the town of San Esteban would now have to abide by the rulings of the Saltillo town council. Their *capitán protector* therefore would consequently not have ultimate say in their town. They write,

Likewise as you are our parents we will discuss what we experienced with our lieutenant captain protector, Don Pedro Francisco de la Fuente Fernández, and the points regarding the governors and town council. It was made evident by a royal order issued by the Royal Tribunal in Mexico City, which states that the protector's jurisdiction should be over civil and criminal matters, but that he should not intervene in matters dealing with fights, drinking, testaments, inventories, and land allocations according to the laws that are cited. But the said lieutenant does not comply,...it has been ordered that he be subordinated and in addition the general commander has notified us that neither now nor in the future will the government of New Spain be acknowledged, in all our activities...since our founding it has always been noted that New Spain had jurisdiction over us and that their laws have been implemented by the *capitán protector*. And even though we have told the said lieutenant of the tools that are in our archive that speak in our favor so that he will be informed of this, he does not abide...he does not execute his obligation to defend and shelter us

as our only superior...he has this position to defend us and to protect all our lands and the rest that are offered to us...on the 21st day of July of this present year said Señor presented us with a letter where he lets us know how he [*capitán protector*] should not civil and criminal matters, only those that are pending, the rest will be transferred to the *Alcalde Mayor* of the Villa of Saltillo, for his decisions,...we are confused over whether to obey said commander who until now has not acknowledges us in any way.⁴²¹

Their past struggles with the Villa of Saltillo clearly demonstrated to the Tlaxcalans that this new arrangement would not favor them. In a broader sense their dissatisfaction also illustrates how Bourbon policies might have affected indigenous communities throughout the kingdom. Anthony Mcfarlane notes that indigenous peoples had a clear sense of how the government affected their lives. They held a "minimal and residual notion of freedom [that] was nurtured by the

⁴²¹ "Asímismo y como a nuestros padres nos precisa a manifestar lo que experimentamos con nuestro teniente de capitán protector; Don Pedro Francisco de la Fuente Fernández, las disfrazadas cuestiones son (?) los, y gobernadores, y cabildo, como consta por un mandamiento real expedido, por la Real Audiencia, de la Ciudad de México, en que manda que la Jurisdicción, del dicho Protector sea en lo civil, y criminalmente, pero riñas, embriagueces, testamentos, en inventarios, y reparticiones, no debe intervenir en el método por las leyes que cita. Pero el dicho teniente no cumple, por lo que se manda en ella, sino sumamente sea subordinado, y lo que más es, desde la conducción, el Señor Comandante General, nos tiene notificados, en que ni ahora ni subsecuentemente se ha de notar la Gobernación de la Nueva España, en todas nuestras diligencias, redicidas, adscrito solo de Nueva Vizcaya siendo así que desde la fundación, siempre se han notado que en todas nuestras diligencias, que nuestra Jurisdicción es de la Nueva España, y se ha manejado por el capitán Protector, y aunque manifestamos con el dicho teniente los instrumentos que tenemos en nuestro archivo, y hablan a nuestro favor para su mayor instrucción lo que no cumple, solo si lleva apuro y debido efecto, sin ejecutar con su obligación en defendernos, ampararnos, como a nuestro único Superior, pues nos hacemos de cargo obtiene dicho empleo, para nuestra mayor protección, y defensa de todas nuestras tierras, y demás que nos ofrece, pues a mayor abundamiento, en el día veinte y uno del mes de Julio de este presente año, nos demostró una carta el dicho señor, en que le hace saber como no tocarle, ni pertenecerle, tocante en las causas civiles, y criminales, solo los que tuviere pendientes, las pasará con el alcalde mayor de la Villa del Saltillo, para su conclusión, y los que sucesivamente le ofrecieren admitiendo las apelaciones en la Audiencia de Guadalajara; lo que en esto nos hallamos muy confusos de obedecer, lo que sucediere por dicho Señor Comandante, que hasta la presente no nos ha hecho notoriedad alguna."

colonial experience of government. Despite its imposing structure of law and bureaucracy, Spanish government...held only loose control over the mass of the population."⁴²² As we have previously seen Spanish officials aptly utilized state ritual to establish control over the colonies, but their policies and laws were only loosely enforced because they lacked the resources to police all corners of the empire. The Tlaxcalans continue,

As it is evident that the Audiencia of Guadalajara should not have jurisdiction in Tlaxala, nor the Alcalde Mayor of the Villa of Saltillo, nor the Governor of Nueva Vizcaya, nor any other inferior Tribunal with or without evidence, we have already manifested where it is convenient, and we have expressed this to the lieutenant, but he does not protect us, nor defend us but he, along with the neighbors of the Villa, does tell us how this community should be governed.⁴²³

By giving the mayor of Saltillo jurisdiction over the civil and criminal matter of San Esteban, authorities brought the full force of the colonial state much closer to the average colonial.⁴²⁴ Hence, John Lynch argues that the primary

⁴²² Anthony McFarlane, "Civil Disorders and Popular Protests in Late Colonial Granada," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 64:1 (1984): 53.

⁴²³ "...como así consta, de que no debe tener jurisdicción en la Nueva Tlaxcala, la Audiencia de Guadalajara, ni el Alcalde Mayor de la Villa del Saltillo, ni el Gobernador de la Nueva Vizcaya, ni otro cualesquiera, otro Tribunal superior, o inferior con o sin constantes, ya hemos manifestado donde conbenga, y de este entrañablemente, experimentamos con el expresado teniente, pues no nos ampara, y no nos defiende antes si introduciendo con sus allegados vecinos de la otra Villa, y manifestándoles, las consecuencias en el modo como se gobiernó este común, y en estas circunstancias"

⁴²⁴ In writing about the Comunero revolt in Colombia John L. Phelan notes, "deeply imbedded in the documents of the Comunero Revolution is the belief that unjust laws were invalid and that inherent in the *corpus mysticum politicum* was the right to some form of popular approval of new taxation. The citizens of New Granada were the heirs of a tradition of bureaucratic decentralization that had slowly but steadily evolved during the reigns of the Habsburgs and early Bourbons. The 'unwritten constitution' provided that basic decisions were reached by informal consultation between the royal bureaucracy and the King's colonial subjects. Usually there emerged a workable compromise between what the central authorities ideally wanted and what

difference between Hapsburg and Bourbon government was that one ruled by consensus and the other was absolutist.⁴²⁵ He writes,

...local oligarchies no longer functioned in the same way as their ancestors; colonial society was now locked into the royal administration. In the process interest groups became more exploitative and saw themselves as part of the imperial elite with a right to share in the gains of empire. Their own demands on Indian labor were not really compatible with the crown's new charges on Indian tax payers in the decades after 1750. There was now competition between exploiters. Spanish America in the late eighteenth century was the scene of irreconcilables. On the American side entrenched interests and expectations of preferment; on the Spanish greater fiscal demands and fewer political concessions.⁴²⁶

Tlaxcalans therefore feared that this local change would limit their freedoms and consequently sought to continue their present state of affairs.

Although the Tlaxcalans' greatest concern was over who had political jurisdiction in San Esteban, they also expressed dismay over the manner in which the residents of Saltillo encroached on their lands and damaged their grazing lands and farms. They state,

...we suffer many vexations, both with the said lieutenant and the neighbors [of Saltillo] they are taking away our lands and they are damaging our farms, grazing lands, and *agostaderos*...we have tried to fully satisfy your Excellency and to refer to our aforementioned privileges and so we ask that through your benign

local conditions and pressures would realistically tolerate. Crisis of 1781 was a constitutional clash between imperial centralization and colonial decentralization." *The People and the King: The Comunero Revolution in Colombia* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1978): xviii.

⁴²⁵ Phelan, *The People and the King*, 333.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid*, 372.

greatness you will send us another *capitán protector* so that he will shelter us and protect us...⁴²⁷

What did the residents of San Esteban expect from their parent colony? It is unclear how the letter arrived in the central Tlaxcalans, so we cannot know if there were any meetings or discussions amongst these parties where they talked about anything other than what was spelled out in this dispatch. In the letter they write,

In whose attention, we await the highest protection and solace as we have referred to some tools that will help us defend our privileges and...every time that they infringe upon us, as has been done by them in the past, and in these terms we explain all that has befallen us, and so we will restore our dishonor. As your sons it should be that you participate in our wishes and pleasures, and so we are obliged every time we see your letters...⁴²⁸

When the Tlaxcalans asked for "some tools they could use to defend their privileges," they were most likely asking for documents that spelled out the privileges given to the Tlaxcalans by royal authorities. The residents of San Esteban commonly used royal letters and papers that either belonged to their

⁴²⁷ "...padecemos tantas vejaciones, así con el dicho teniente, como con los otros vecinos, en nuestras tierras, las están cercenando, como en lo demás daños a nuestras sementeras, y pastos, en nuestros agostaderos, y demás que no referimos, propasándose en todo lo mandado, por tanto tuvimos por bien de dar entera satisfacción a su Excelencia y a deducir nuestros dichos fueros y privilegios, y a suplicar su grande benignidad, se sirva de proveernos de otro capitán protector general, para nuestra mayor defensa y amparo..." *Colección de documentos para la historia de Tlaxcala*, 193-199.

⁴²⁸ "En cuya atención, esperamos el mayor amparo, y consuelo como tenemos referido de algunos instrumentos, en que podemos defender nuestros privilegios y...cada que nos ofrezca (contravención), en donde como en los demás que de él han procedido, y en estos términos explicamos todo lo que nos ha acaecido, y restituimos nuestras deshonras. Porque como hijos de Uds. es fuerza que sean participes en nuestros gustos y placeres, y quecamos obligados cada que veamos las letras de Uds., la que rendidamente, y con todo nuestro fraternal amor ejecutamos."

community or to that of the original Tlaxcalans to support their claims. They clearly are not asking for help in organizing a local rebellion. In addition, the Tlaxcalans' actions may have been shaped by their previous experiences, but they were not provincial. They had a larger world-view that stretched beyond their community. They may not have reached out to other indigenous or *casta* groups in the region, but they understood that their universe extended beyond the confines of their town and consequently sought out help from their far off parent colony in central New Spain.⁴²⁹

Finally, this letter illustrates the Tlaxcalans' understanding of how colonial government functioned. Although they outlined many complaints against local and regional authorities, they also made sure to point out that they remained loyal vassals of the king. After condemning the policy that placed them under the

Primo Feliciano Velázquez, *Colección de documentos para la historia de San Luis Potosí*. Vol. 1-4 (San Luis Potosí: Archivo Historico de San Luis Potosí, 1985): 193-199.

⁴²⁹ This would contrast with Eric Van Young's assessment of indigenous villages. He writes, "Certainly, the ringing of village church bells was important in its own right, often serving to call rural people to the defense of their pueblos during the rebellion or to mobilize them for the insurgent or royalist cause. Such ringing, however was only the aural manifestation of a deeper projection of community into the outside world and ultimately of the impulse toward communal auto-defense that drove much of indigenous and more generally rural participation in the anticolonial insurgency. I have already traced the continuity both typological and ideological between village disturbances of the late colonial period and similar eruptions over much of central New Spain after 1810. Here, the task is to explore more deeply the wellsprings of village identity in demonstrating how the fundamental axes of historical memory, time and sacrality converged in the communal space. Since it has left the most abundant documentation, it turns out that contention over land is perhaps the best route into the interior of village life and its basic cognitive categories, notwithstanding my insistence that agrarian conflict per se was not at the heart of popular insurgency. The manner in which collective memory, the reckoning of time, and the sacral landscape combined in the forging of village identity explains much about the political horizons of the rural people, patters of collective action in the countryside, and villagers' messianically tinged political discourse." *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and*

jurisdiction of Saltillo, they write, "despite of these [complaints] we await your response and we say that we will obey, as always we will acknowledge your Excellency as long [as his rulings] match our respective Royal Edicts and laws that were acquired from the Excellent Viceroy." ⁴³⁰ Their show of deference is clearly tempered by their claim that the documents they hold may have greater validity than the king's new decrees. They are perhaps following the old adage of "obedezco pero no cumplo." The Tlaxcalans were apparently also aware that their letter might be read by royal officials and as we will see, such documents might have created problems for the Tlaxcalans from the nearby town of Alamo later in the colonial period.

This conflict between San Esteban and Saltillo illustrates broader late eighteenth century problems created when towns like San Esteban began to lose jurisdiction and autonomy because of Bourbon policies. Moreover, local conflicts in these settlements also emerged because of the development of commercial agriculture and population growth. ⁴³¹ Although it is difficult to measure the distress felt by the residents of San Esteban, David Adams argues that authorities in Monclova "upheld what remained of San Esteban's autonomy and blocked

the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810-1821 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001): 484

⁴³⁰ "...sin embargo aguardamos la resulta y decimos que si resultare cosa particular la que obedecemos, como siempre así ejecutamos y daremos cuenta a su excelencia arreglado a nuestras respectivas Reales Cédulas, y despachos adquiridos de los Excelentísimos Señores Virreyes, a deducir nuestra jurisdicción..." *Colección de documentos*

⁴³¹ Eric Van Young, "Conflict and Solidarity in Indian Village Life: The Guadalajara Region in the Late Colonial Period," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 64:1 (1984): 65-67.

Euro-Mexican attempts to usurp its lands and water right.”⁴³² If colonial authorities continued to generally favor the residents of San Esteban in land title dispute cases this might explain the lack of rioting on the part of the Tlaxcalans. Why protest when things are still in your favor? Yet, in a broader sense, these economic and governmental changes signaled a deeper crisis. The relationship that the Tlaxcalans developed over centuries with the Crown was being redefined. As they constantly pointed out in their petitions to the king, they were and continued to be loyal vassals. The changes they were forced to accept did not appear to make any sense within the context of what they perceived to be their place in the colonial order and their longstanding relationship with the king. Northern Tlaxcalans may have continued to win favor from colonial authorities, but there were increasing challenges faced by the residents of San Esteban that did place greater distress upon this community.

The New Colonial Order

In December of 1781 Tlaxcalans began this new state of affairs by petitioning the Villa of Saltillo for a permit to celebrate the procession of the Virgin of Guadalupe on the eleventh and twelfth of December. On December 12th the residents of San Esteban asked to carry the image of the Virgin through the streets of their own town. They were given permission for this celebration, but

⁴³² David B. Adams, “Borderland Communities in Conflict: Saltillo, San Esteban, and the Struggle for Municipal Autonomy, 1591-1838,” *Locus* 6:1 (1993): 9.

the Villa of Saltillo stipulated that all those Tlaxcalans attending the event will, "do so in an orderly fashion with modesty and composure and without haste" as has previously been done.⁴³³ They added that they gave permission for such an event, but "it was valid for only this one instance."⁴³⁴ The Villa's town council was very aware that Tlaxcalans had a tendency to use government documents later when they needed support for their claims, even though said papers may not have applied for all times. Tlaxcalans kept a meticulous account of these records and kept them for centuries.

Saltillo's leaders also clearly wanted to control the behavior of the Tlaxcalans, which they felt was out of control or lacking in decorum. The later colonial period was in effect a struggle to bring order where apparently none had previously existed (or at least according to Spanish residents).⁴³⁵ This struggle for control shaped relations between these two municipalities. Therefore, although it appeared that Tlaxcalans had been dealt a major blow, as Saltillo had greater say in San Esteban's affairs than in previous times. Tlaxcalans continued to fight against Saltillo's (or any outside entities) efforts to control their affairs. Late colonial records do not indicate that any act that affected the community of San

⁴³³ "...que todos los que asistan vayan en order con modestía y compostura sin presipitación (como congran dolor de nuestro corazon alguna vez hemos experimentado en semejantes actos) ...y religiosos actos de la Santa Católica iglesia que cuanto dispensados, como debemos, complacen y honran a Dios, y su santísima Madre, tanto le agravian, y ofrended, cuando se ejecutan sin la atención, y honor, que exige su santidad." AHS, PM, C32, e60, 28f

⁴³⁴ "Y valga por esta sola ves sin ejemplar." AHS, PM, C32, e60, 28f.

⁴³⁵ Juan Pedro Viqueira Albá, *Propriety and Permissiveness in Bourbon Mexico* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1999).

Esteban by Saltillo was left unanswered. Tlaxcalans continued to be very involved in determining how their town was governed. They may have won as many disputes as they lost. Their tactics continued to be rather effective

As we have seen, Tlaxcalans became very adept at maneuvering through the colonial legal system. The fact that Saltillo now had some jurisdiction over San Esteban did seem to change how the two municipalities dealt with one another. Saltillo now seemed to interfere in San Esteban's affairs with greater frequency. Yet, this did not deter Tlaxcalans from openly resisting new policies or outside intervention when they felt it was necessary.

In 1794 the two municipalities entered into a dispute over a drainage ditch that served as the border between the two towns. The Tlaxcalans contacted the governor and wrote,

We ask and plead that the old "asequía" which has been cleared by order of Your Majesty is opened so that members of the pueblo can have access to water for use in their farms as they have suffered because of the drought and we have never been satisfied with respect that said "asequía" has been reorganized that it is an ancient possession of the border marked by the Viceroys of New Spain and only our kind...Catholic Kings of Castille they stated in their royal edicts that in all the pueblos of America that those marked or distributed lands and borders will not be taken away at no time if uninhabited.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁶"...pedimos y suplicamos que la asequia Antigua que se ha segado de orden de Vuestra Majestad se de libre para el uso de la agua para que abiliten los porcioneros de dicho pueblo que carecen de ella para el cultivo de sus huertas que a la presente esta padeciendo por la llegada de la sequia y nunca quedamos conforme respecto que dicha asequia se ha reconocido de antigua posesion por linderos demarcados por los excelentisimos Señores Virreyes de Nueva españa y tan solamente solo nuestros amabilicimos Católicos Monarcas Reyes de Castilla encargan por sus reales cedula que en todos los pueblos de la America que les señalaren o repartieren en las tierras

The Saltillo town council responded and said that,

With the agreement of the illustrious council of the villa, the attorney general for the right arrangement of the street that is commonly called San Francisco they ordered that the "asequía" that was next to the doors of the Villa's neighbors' homes...is covered so that the way is cleared in that street...⁴³⁷

Saltillo complained that despite all their efforts to appease the residents of San Esteban said town still vehemently opposed such a change, despite of the fact that "they had no reason to oppose it." The Saltillo council stated that the Tlaxcalans had used coarse language to insult them at a meeting that took place the day before. In said meeting they had, "manifested their repugnancy toward the political government of the Republic."⁴³⁸ In fact, a resident of San Esteban, Juan Gil Cortés, verbally attacked one of the justices (the one who penned the letter to the governor, José de Santivañez y Zevallos). He was ordered to quiet down, but refused and continued to scandalize the meeting. Zevallos consequently imprisoned Cortés.

y sus linderos nunca les puedan quitar en ningun tiempo por despoblados..." Valdés and del Bosque, *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 311.

⁴³⁷"Que con acuerdo del ilustre cabildo de esta Villa, el sindico procurador general de ella para la buena disposición de la calle que comunmente llamán de San Francisco hizo que una azequía que estaba pegada a las puertas de las casas de los vezinos de esta Villa...se tapáse para dejar el paso franco a la dicha calle, de que carecía, con notable fealdad, y perjuicio de las viviendas que para tal providencia ha tenido este ayuntamiento la atención de mandar sitar a el cabildo de dichos naturales..." Ibid, 312.

⁴³⁸ "...sin embargo de no tener razón de oponerse a lo regular y bien asertado de esta benefícosa determinación groseramente en la concurrencia que se hizo el día de ayer, del ilustre cabildo de esta Villa el Señor cura del insinuado Pueblo y su cabildo dejandose ver en forma de tumultuarios muchos de los naturales manifestaron la natural repugnancia que tienen los mas contentos del común, a el gobierno político de la Republica..." Ibid, 312.

Tlaxcalans thought that Saltillo had ulterior motives for moving the ditch. Saltillo told them that it would help improve the area's appearance. San Esteban's *cabildo* instead saw this as a question of municipal control and territorial ownership of lands that they argued traditionally had belonged to them. They wrote,

...the governor, town council, justice, and administrator of the pueblo of San Esteban de Nueva Tlaxcala, in the name of all the capitulares of said town we appear in front of your honor and we say in the strongest form that there is reason and since its primitive foundation, as is supported by various documents exercised by the judge commissioned by the Excellent Viceroys of this New Spain and there has not been opposition over the said "asequía" until the present occasion as it turns out that the judges of this Villa tried to mow down the said asequía without our consent...and this is why we turn to the superiority of your lordship and we hope that you will be charitable because of your Christian zeal and you will order that said señores of the Villa will not bother us and will leave the said *asequía* that has been cut..⁴³⁹

The Tlaxcalans' main argument was based on the assumption that the irrigation ditch had been the border between the towns since its "primitiva fundación." Saltillo therefore did not neglect an opportunity to point this out to the governor and they stated that the Tlaxcalans had not presented written proof to

⁴³⁹ "...el gobernador, cabildo, Justicia, y regimiento de este pueblo de San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala por si, y a nombre de todos los capitulares de dicho pueblo parecemos ante Vuestra Señoría y decimos en la más vastante forma que haya lugar en derecho y al nuestro conbenga que por cuanto desde su primitiva fundación tenemos conocido una asequía por lindero de amvas jurisdicciones, como consta por varios documentos practicados por los señores juezes comicionados de orden de los exelentísimos señores virreyes de esta Nueva España y no ha habido contradición sobre la dicha asequía hasta la presente ocasión resulta de que los señores juezes de esta villa trataron (de) segar la dicha asequía sin libre consentimiento nuestro...por lo que nos es indispensable ocurrir a la superioridad de su señoría a este reclamo para que su señoría se sirva vernos con caridad, bajo su christiano y buen selo de mandarles a los señores capitulares de la Villa de que no nos perjudiquen y nos dejen libre dicha asequía que han segado." Ibid, 314.

support their claims, but could only justify it through their "mal fundados dichos" (unsubstantiated stories).⁴⁴⁰

The two councils finally came to a compromise, despite the fact, said the Saltillo council, "that the irrigation ditch made the street highly unattractive and was of little or no use to the Tlaxcalans." Yet, because "the [Saltillo] council was primarily interested in maintaining the 'buen selo a la quietud, paz, y sosiego' (will jealously guard the peace)" they would pass a resolution that was convenient and beneficial to both the Villa and the Pueblo.⁴⁴¹ The irrigation ditch that lay near the street of San Francisco would be filled in and the one that divided the two towns would be moved. A plaza that had been bought by the Tlaxcalan *cofradía* of the Santísimo Sacramento would remain this property, as they had paid for it. Said the agreement,

...his belongings and goods that we have and will have, with total submission to your Majesty's judges and justices and we renounce the laws that may favor us as Tlaxcalan Indians and that are in opposition of this agreement; so that this agreement is not denied those who could sign it did and the so did their interpreter as a consequence that this town council and witness who assisted as there is no scribe in this jurisdiction.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid, 312.

⁴⁴¹" ...sus personas y bienes habidos y por haver, con total sumisión de los señores juezes y justicias de su majestad y renuncian de las leyes que como tales y indios Tlaxcaltecas pudieran faboreserles en oposición de lo tratado; para no volverse de ellas por ningun caso de los contenidos firmaron los que supieron y su interprete a consecuencia de este Ayuntamiento y testigos de asistencia en falta de escribano en el contorno de la jurisdicción." Ibid, 318.

⁴⁴² Ibid, 319.

This episode outlines how low colonial society still appeared to be ruled by negotiation and consensus. Although there are an increasing number of studies that point to the development of popular riots in Spanish America during the eighteenth century, generally the period following initial contact in the seventeenth century is perceived as being "tranquil." Why was this the case? Murdo Macleod suggests that colonial empires, "established peace and hegemony by a blend of monopoly of violence and potential for coercion, plus just enough legitimacy to persuade some of the dominated to accept the status quo when weighed against the other alternatives."⁴⁴³ Other scholars would concur with this assessment. Friedrich Katz notes that the crown and *encomenderos* were seen as legitimate leaders in the eyes of indigenous peoples.⁴⁴⁴ In his study of the local parishes and parishioners William Taylor surmises that the Bourbons contributed to revolutions in the nineteenth century by "cutting themselves loose from divine right...political power was becoming desacrilized...and increasingly separated from familiar patterns of attachment, convenience, and consent."⁴⁴⁵

In addition, broader insurgent movement were thus thwarted by the divide and conquer strategy opted by what in essence was a weak colonial state (especially peripheral areas like northern New Spain). This approach was

⁴⁴³ Murdo J. Macleod, "Some Thoughts on the Pax Colonial, Colonial Violence, and Perceptions of Both," In *Native Resistance and the Pax Colonial in New Spain*, edited by Susan Schroeder (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998): 127.

⁴⁴⁴ Friedrich Katz, "Rural Uprising in Preconquest and Colonial Mexico," In *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution*, edited by Friedrich Katz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988): 79.

especially effective in areas of great linguistic and cultural diversity, like New Spain. The colonial state utilized existing animosities amongst indigenous groups and would favor one against another, thus creating an atmosphere of distrust amongst most groups.

The study of ethnicity is especially important for understanding the lack of insurrections in the colonial period and popular participation in insurgent movements in Independence era Mexico. If we look at the examples of Peru and Mexico we see that Peruvian society was much more prone to indigenous rebellions. Why was this the case? Frederick Katz suggests that it was because there was less diversity in Peru, both linguistically and culturally, that helped foster these rebellions.⁴⁴⁶ Mexico was much different, as it was more diverse. John Coatsworth has thus observed that it takes a great amount of cohesiveness for violent collective action to take place. Analyzing slave rebellions, he writes,

In slave regions the cultural unity of the subordinate population was often based, where it appeared, on a common, recent experience in Africa. The standard against which rulers were judged and courage ignited was the experience of freedom in a different society. The only parallel to this in non-slave areas was the collective memory of missions Indians, sometimes reminded of their past by confederates who had refused to settle down.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁵ William B. Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth Century Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996): 472.

⁴⁴⁶ Katz, "Rural Uprising," 79-80.

⁴⁴⁷ John H. Coatsworth, "Patterns of Rural Rebellion in Latin America: Mexico in Comparative Perspective," In *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico*, ed. by Friedrich Katz. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988): 52.

One such example of this is the Malê slave rebellion in Bahia, Brazil in 1835. It was facilitated by the fact that Nagós and Hausas made up 81.6 percent of those participating. Yet, the fact that indigenous communities found it much more difficult to unite after Spanish policies were implemented and after they had lived under colonial rule for a century or so was also a reason why insurgent movements were more difficult to foment in the later colonial period.⁴⁴⁸

“...and Spaniards will no longer rule”

Northern Tlaxcalans did not have a history or tradition of mass or violent protest against the colonial state. They learned to maneuver within this complex system and to protest in ways that minimized their chances of being imprisoned or punished by colonial officials. Their identity as civilized conquerors also worked against the development of such movements. How could they justify their claims of being conquering settlers deserving of better treatment than that given to the warlike nomadic groups if they attacked the colonial government? Yet, they were accused by increasingly suspicious officials of attempting to incite movements against Spanish rule and the colonial state. In two instances, one taking place in 1801 and other during the Wars for Independence in 1816, Tlaxcalans of Alamo (adjacent to Parras) and San Esteban were brought before colonial authorities accused of trying to foment movements to supplant the colonial order. The first

⁴⁴⁸ See, Susan Deeds, "First-Generation Rebellions in Seventeenth-Century Nueva Vizcaya," *Native Resistance and the Pax Colonial in New Spain*. Edited by Susan Schroeder (Lincoln:

incident is interesting in that it once again illustrates how northern Tlaxcalans developed links with central Tlaxcala. Ultimately, the case against the Alamo Tlaxcalan council was dismissed for lack of evidence. In the 1816 accusation, Manuel Quiteiro, a Tlaxcalan resident of San Esteban was imprisoned for shouting the subversive phrase “Viva la America” in a public place. This incident is relevant, not simply because it seems to illustrate a growing dissatisfaction amongst Tlaxcalans (or at least one of them), but perhaps most importantly because of the harsh punishment that was given to Quiteiro. It seems to signal an end to the Tlaxcalan’s special colonial status.

In May of 1801 three members of the Tlaxcalan colony in Alamo were imprisoned, standing accused of supporting a movement to supplant the king of Spain with a Tlaxcalan king. In his study of popular insurrection in Independence era Mexico Eric Van Young discusses two millenarian episodes both involving Tlaxcalans and both occurring around 1800-1801, one of which shares some similar aspects to the Alamo episode. In that case, authorities in the northern province of Durango captured José Bernardo Herrada in 1801. He consequently confessed to concocting a plan to have his father, the indigenous governor of Tlaxcala (in central Mexico), crowned Indian King of New Spain. Herrada said he had 40,000 signatures that supported his effort and the support of English and French troops. He was eventually jailed and condemned to six years of penal

University of Nebraska Press, 1998): 1-29.

servitude in Havana. Herrada escaped in 1805 in Zacatecas as he was transported to Cuba.⁴⁴⁹ There is no further evidence to suggest that this was an actual plan to overthrow the colonial government. The Alamo episode also appears to be an effort by colonial authorities to thwart what they considered to be a possible insurrection, but which most probably simply reflected Spanish fears of indigenous rebellions.

In the Alamo incident, the Tlaxcalan leaders Antonio Ábila, Gregorio Hernández and Prudencio Martínez were questioned by the governor of Coahuila, Antonio Cordero, about a possible uprising. All three gave statements along with the other three witnesses. The age and professions of two of the three were stated. Antonio de Ábila was 30 and a *labrador* and Gregorio Hernández was 35 and also a *labrador*. The first to give his statement was Antonio de Ábila. When asked if he denied that he had spoken to an individual about an uprising and the coronation of a Tlaxcalan king, Ábila said he knew nothing about this. Gregorio Hernández gave the second testimony. When he was asked if he knew why he was imprisoned, he responded that it might be because in May of the previous year a man showed up in their town looking for a certain woman. Gregorio said the man's name was Silvestre Serillán and that he came from the "Gran Tlaxcala." Serillán said his father was on his way to Chihuahua and he proclaimed that that Spaniards would no longer govern. Hernández said Serillan was only in Alamo

⁴⁴⁹ Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion*, 456.

for two and a half days. When asked what their town's governor, Prudencio Martínez, said to Serillan when he said that "Spaniards would no longer rule," Hernández said that the governor ignored Serillán.

Three witnesses were also asked to testify regarding the incident. The first was José Alberto, who said he knew that three men who were in jail, but did not know why they had been imprisoned. He said he knew that an Indian had come to their town last year and that he spoke to the town council, as well as to other members of the community. As far as José Alberto knew the outsider came looking for a woman. He thought the man was in town for three or four days, but did not know the man's name. The *alcalde*, Prudencio Martínez, had given him one *real* to help him on his journey.

The second witness, Mateo Adreano, said he was not sure why the three Tlaxcalans were imprisoned. He was asked if he knew of an Indian who came to their town last year, how long he stayed, and what matters he came to discuss. Mateo Adreano said he knew an Indian came there, but not for what reason. He said the man stayed for five to six days and that the *alcalde* and the scribe had given him a signed paper, but Mateo Adreano said he did not know what the paper said. When asked if he knew if said Indian spoke of an uprising instigated in the Gran Tlaxcala and spreading to other towns, Mateo Adreano said he knew of no such thing.

The final witness, Nicolas Guerrero, also said he did not know why the Tlaxalans were imprisoned. When asked if he knew of a traveler who had stopped in their town the year before, he responded that he did not know anything about this. Finally, he was asked if he knew anything about an uprising planned by the Indians of this town, he said that all he knew was that the day Prudencio Martínez was jailed Jose de Abila (the other prisoner) asked Martínez why he thought he was imprisoned. Prudencio responded that he did not know. Ábila's explanation was that perhaps it was because Juan José, who had passed away, "andaba alborotando a los Indios del Pueblo para que se fueran a la Gran Tlaxcala (was trying to convince the Indians of the Pueblo to go to the Gran Tlaxcala)."

The second prisoner, Jose de Ábila, was then brought in for questioning. He said he also was unaware of why he had been jailed. When asked if he knew anything about a foreigner that came to their town a year ago, he said he knew nothing about his. When asked if he had any information regarding an uprising that was supposedly planned by the *alcalde* of the town of Alamo, Prudencio Martínez, he said that he knew that they wanted to go to Tlaxcala so they could fight for water rights that belonged to Don Pedro España, but he knew nothing else. He said that he had heard about this from an Indian that had now passed away.

Finally, Prudencio Martínez was brought in to give his confession. He claimed that the letter he signed was to be taken to Chihuahua. It asked that the

General Commander assign a new *capitán protector* to the town. On his way the subject stopped in Monclova, Coahuila to see the provincial governor. He said he had nothing else to say.

In June of that year the governor responded that the three men should remain in jail until they received notice from royal authorities, as some of the testimony stated that they had heard about possibly rebellious actions. The royal response came in July of 1801. Colonial authorities ordered that all three men be set free, as “there was no substantial information” given by the witnesses or the detainees. The men were imprisoned a total of three months, from May to July of that year. The last official correspondence from Parras stated that they would abide by the ruling and that the men would be set free.

It does not appear that the men planned or were involved in planning a rebellion. They were brought in for questioning one year after the visit from the traveler, so they would have had time to carry out their plan. Their behavior is not unlike that exhibited by the members of the San Esteban council, who had contacted the parent colony of Tlaxcala back in 1781. It seems likely that the Alamo council likewise sought to protect land and water rights by sending correspondence to Tlaxcala and to government officials. The Parras council’s fear of rebellion was fed by the fact that any form of group activity by indigenous peoples now garnered suspicion. There was growing apprehension in the colonies, but their fear of a Tlaxcalan rebellion seems to be very misplaced.

The Independence Movement in the North

Civil and religious authorities in the north tried to diffuse any attempts by insurgents to foment popular support of the independence movement in the region. They characterized the insurgents' tactics as blatant attempts to enrich themselves and especially abhorred the way they manipulated religious icons, like the Virgin of Guadalupe, to garner support for their cause. In an 1811 circular ecclesiastical authorities were urged by the Governor to encourage local priests to preach against the movement. They write,

If at any time, we as clerics should enforce the zeal of the ministry that has shaped our province in the service of God, the King, and our Patriotic Nation, it is in the present circumstances. When ungodliness and dissolution is predicated... certain men have appropriated the title of Conquerors of America and are utilizing the great name of the Nation and have confused specific issues... their only intent, is to reap great fortunes over the ruins of their fellow men...⁴⁵⁰

When ecclesiastical authorities say that these men have "appropriated the title of Conquerors of America" they are evidently speaking about Creole insurgents, which they saw as the primary instigators of the movement.⁴⁵¹ Their

⁴⁵⁰ "Si en algun tiempo, devemos todos los eclesiasticos enforsar el celo del Ministerio en que nos ha colorado la divina providencia en el mejor servicio de Dios el Rey y obsequio de la Nación de la Patria es en las actuales circunstancias, en que la impiedad y disolucion se ha propagado... unos hombres, que apropiandose del especioso tituo de conquistadores, de esta America, y valiendo del grande nombre de la Nación, confundiendo los intereses particulares de suspensonar con la mayor felicidad de esta; no habido otro su intento, que labrar su fortuna sobre las ruinas de sus semejantes..." Para que se predique contra los insurgentes, 1811. Libro de Gobierno #2, foja #169.

⁴⁵¹ David Brading writes, "...the creole mind dwelt endlessly on the dramatic scenes of the conquest and the grandeur of Tenochtitlan, fixing on the figures of Cortés, Las Casas, Moctezuma and Cuauhtémoc... Deficient in formal ideology, the movement for independence at times degenerated into a family quarrel between peninsulars and creoles which fed off ethnic slander and

manipulation of religious icons was especially despised by the clerics, as they saw this as the primary way they "duped" indigenous peoples and other groups into joining the movement. The clerics claimed that the insurgents were not only willing to utilize the image of the Virgin, but they predicated hate against European Spaniards; a tactic that would have been especially distasteful and alarming to ecclesiastical authorities, as many were peninsular Spaniards. They write,

...it has been the methods they have used to reach their depraved and opportunistic ends, and they did not omit any they felt would most efficiently promote their cause, and consequently have promulgated hate against all Europeans, without taking into account any distinction and have used the sacred voice of Religion,...raising the voice (and the spirit is horrified even just saying this) of Viva our Lady of Guadalupe and using her divine name to carry out the gravest and most horrifying robberies and pillaging, so that with the zeal of piety and religion they seduce those who are not weary and make them believe that justice is on their side...⁴⁵²

social prejudice. To rally the mass of the population against Spain, Mier and Bustamante propagated the myth of a Mexican nation, already in existence prior to the conquest and now, after 300 years of enslavement, about to recover its freedom. In practice, however, it was the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron and mother of all inhabitants of New Spain which was invoked to rally the masses and the elite in common insurgency against Spain. The rebels' passionate rejection of all ethnic distinctions was justified by the affirmation of a common identity of all ethnic distinctions was justified by the affirmation of a common identity as Mexicans. In effect, the themes and symbols of creole patriotism-that idiosyncratic amalgam of Marian devotion, hatred of Spanish immigrants, and identification with the Aztec past-were here transmuted into the precocious rhetoric of a Mexican nationalism which was designed to unite creoles, mulattos, mestizos and Indians in the struggle for independence. *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State, 1492-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 601-602.

⁴⁵² "...han sido los medios de que se han salido para lograr sus deprevados fines, ni omitieron otros que creyeron más eficaces y oportunas para el efecto que les fueron necesar odio implacable contra todo europeo sin distinción de circunstancia tomando en boca el sagrado nombre de la Religion,...levantando el grito (el animo se horrorixa al profesarlo) de viva nuestra Señora de Guadalupe poniendo de contreseña este divino nombre para executar, los más graves, y

The authorities' anger towards Creole insurgents and their tactics veiled a fear amongst the elite that this movement would soon become much more widespread and would reach all levels of society. Their comments were laced with class overtones. They conclude by saying,

...we need to recognize the legitimate government established by our beloved king, Don Fernando VII, it is because of him and his dynasty that correspond the incontestable right to these dominions in America and their saintly religion that we profess can never legitimate robbery, pillaging, the desecration of virgins, dishonoring of priests or superiors, nor disrespect towards the church, and their Ministers, and any idea that is different from this is a great error and should be punished severely.⁴⁵³

So it was that in this increasingly tense atmosphere Manuel Quiteiro, a citizen of San Esteban, made the mistake of speaking out publicly in support of the Independence movement. That episode, the only one that has been found where Tlaxcalans openly supported independence from Spain, illustrates the growing apprehension amongst northern authorities about indigenous rebellion. In addition, this incident also indicates how the Tlaxcalans' status changed in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

horribles robos, y saqueos, para con el celo de la piedad, y religion seducir los incautos y hacerlos concevir la justicia de su causo." Ibid, 1811.

⁴⁵³ "...devemos reconocer el lejítimo gobierno establecido por nuestro adorado Rey el Sr. Dn. Fernando Septimo a quien, y su Dinastia corresponden por un incostestable derecho los dominios de estas pocaciones de America que su religion Santa que profesamos jamas puede tener por licito ni el robo, no la rapiña, ni la velacion de las virgenes, ni la falta de honor devido a los Padres, y superiores, ni la de respeto a la Iglesia, y sus Ministros, y que toda idea que sea diferente de estas Maximas error intolerable digno del mayor castigo..." Ibid, 1811.

In 1816, Manuel Quiteiro, was accused of inciting anti-Spanish sentiments by going out in public and yelling out “Viva la America.” There were four witnesses in this case. The first, Pedro de Herran, was one of the men who heard Quiteiro yell these words and consequently chased him down the streets of San Esteban. Herran was the second lieutenant in the *Dragones Provinciales of Nueva Galicia*. He said that on March 2, 1816, he and Jose Antonio Gorivaz, Esteban Grande, and Miguel Linares were seated facing the Pueblo of San Esteban at around 4:30 in the afternoon. They then heard Quiteiro shouting “que el que dijese Viva España...traia una pistola para darle un pistoletaso” (that he had a gun and would shoot anyone who said Viva Spain). Quiteiro then went down the Puente Street and the four men followed him. They chased him for a while but were not able to catch up with him. They asked someone if they knew who that man was and where he lived and Pedro Vendigas's servant gave them this information. Finally the interview transcript stated:

Question: Was the Indian Quiteiro drunk when he yelled "Viva la América" on the bridge of the Pueblo the afternoon of said day?

Response from Pedro de Herran: said witness replied that he [Quiteiro] was more within his senses than drunk and he knows this because the Indian tried to escape through some farms after he yelled out those words so that he would not be recognized. He said he had nothing else to declare and what he had stated was true and he swears to it.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵⁴ Pregunta: si cuando el Indio Quiterio vistió las voses de Viva la America en el Puente del Pueblo la tarde del día dos del corriente se le advertía si estaba ebrío o no
Respuesta: que segun advirtió el que declara estaba mas en su juicio que ebrío y la razón es de que el Indio despues de haber vestido aquellas voses trató de escaparse por dentro de unas huestas para

The next witness, 56 year-old Esteban Grande, told a similar story. He also said that in December of last year he and others had heard an Indian, who appeared to be drunk, shout out "Viva America" in the plaza of San Esteban. It seemed to him that Quiteiro was that man. Grande also said that Quiteiro may have been a little drunk, but he was more in his senses than out of them.

The following witness, José Antonio Gorivar, told his version of the events (which did not deviate much from the stories told by the other men) and said that it did not appear to him that Quiteiro was drunk, as he had enough sense to run away from them. That indicated to him that Manuel Quiteiro knew what he was doing.

Antonio Faboada gave the final testimony. He was a merchant who had served as an assistant in the plaza a year ago when Miguel Lobo Guerrero was commander. He said he knew Quiteiro had previously yelled out "Viva la América" and had been imprisoned in a Saltillo jail for six to eight days after which Lobo Guerrero had set him free.

Manuel Quiteiro was finally given the opportunity to state his case. He said he and a friend went drinking on the day in question and at one point he does remember shouting out "Viva la América" and other things, but did not recall saying anything about Spain. He said he did not have a clear memory of events,

que no lo consiesen: que no tiene mas que decir y que lo dicho es la verdad a cargo del juramento hecho...AGEC, Fondo Colonial, C39, e17, 19f.

as he was drunk. Quiteiro stated that he did recall that he had previously been imprisoned for shouting "Viva la América" when Miguel Lobo Guerrero was commander, but that he had been drunk then also. Quiteiro said he did not mean anything by what he said and had not been induced by anyone to say it. He concluded by stating that the only reason he shouted "Viva la América" was because he was drunk and that he was "born under the Spanish government and knew no other."

Saltillo officials were not very impressed by Quiteiro's comments and responded that drunkenness was no excuse for what he had done. They recommended that he be imprisoned for four years and be forced to labor in public works projects for one year. They recommended that, "his sentence be made public and known amongst the other Indians of the Pueblo so that they will be forewarned and their behavior corrected."⁴⁵⁵

Authorities in Monterrey upheld the judgement. According to officials Manuel Quiteiro had violated Article 42, which stated that anyone who spoke or wrote any comments that supported sedition or rebellion should suffer the death penalty or corporeal punishment, depending on the gravity of the crime. Quiteiro's actions therefore warranted that he should be whipped twenty-five

⁴⁵⁵ "...y que esta sentencia aplicada que sea a Quiteiro se haga publica y notoria a los demas Indios de este Pueblo para su escarmiento y corrección" Archivo General del Estado de Coahuila, FC, C39, e17, 19f.

times in the public square of San Esteban and then he should be assigned one year of forced labor.⁴⁵⁶

In a last ditch effort to garner a lighter penalty for her husband, María Juana Jacova, wrote authorities in Monterrey asking that his sentence be suspended as he had already been punished by suffering in jail. She stated in her letter:

With the most profound submission that I can express I place myself at the beloved feet of your lordship...so say I, María Juana Jacova of said pueblo: poor woman, and having a large family...your lordship should know that for the past four miserable months my husband has been jailed in the prison of the Villa. His name is Miguel Quiteiro and he is from said Pueblo. He has suffered many calamities, nudity...I have suffered also. He is a desolate man who was out of his senses and did not know what he was saying when he spoke the words 'Viva la América'...I have no one who will take solace upon me as I am the most unhappy woman as I have to support my husband while he is in jail...may you take pity upon me and will free him...this is enough punishment...Do this because I have much family...⁴⁵⁷

An accompanying note by the brigadier, Don Diego Garcia Conde, did not recommend leniency in this case and said that Quiteiro had previously conspired to start an uprising in said Villa and had disturbed the public order. This had not been previously mentioned, unless Garcia Conde was referring to the incident that had taken place a year earlier when Manuel Quiteiro also yelled out "Viva la América." Quiteiro was transferred to Monterrey. It is unknown what eventually

⁴⁵⁶ May 27, 1816, Monterrey. AGEC, FC, C39, e17, 9f.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

became of him. The fact that Quiteiro was most likely not involved in an effort to foment an insurgent movement against the colonial state does not mean that Tlaxcalans could not have participated or might have chosen sides during the independence period. It does mean that we have not found the sources to support this assessment.

More than anything this sad episode does not so much tell us about the development of a possible Tlaxcalan rebellion, but about the declining status of the Tlaxcalans. Although they fought to have control over their own township, when the Villa was given authority over certain political matters in San Esteban, this had a detrimental effect on the town. Quiteiro had in fact been kept in a Saltillo jail, something that would not have happened prior to 1787. Authorities in both Monterrey and Saltillo now had greater say in the affairs of San Esteban. In addition, the fact that Quiteiro was publicly whipped also indicates how the Tlaxcalans' status was changing. It would have been unthinkable for a Tlaxcalan to be treated in such a manner twenty or thirty years earlier. Tlaxcalans would not have accepted this, but Spanish authorities would also have been deterred from acting in this matter by the fact that it was the king and viceroy who had ultimate jurisdiction in San Esteban. Such violence did not seem to form part of the relationship established between the Tlaxcalans and Spaniards. Spanish settlers and officials needed the Tlaxcans as they served as a civilizing element. Tlaxcalans were loyal subjects as long as they were given preferential treatment.

Conclusion

Indigenous societies were deeply affected by the demographic, economic, and political changes that took place in New Spain in the early nineteenth century. Their interpretation of such events and their reactions have yet to be fully chronicled by historians.⁴⁵⁸ Available evidence would seem to indicate that indigenous people's behavior during the movements for independence was an expression of anger towards a changing system that no longer functioned as it had done in previous decades. Tlaxcalan rebellion and participation in Independence era insurgent movements is non-existent, but they did experience changes that disrupted and transformed their relationship with colonial authorities. They did not react violently, but the violence wielded as a consequence of being perceived as possible rebels, illustrate the nature of this changing social order. This changing political landscape was possibly why other indigenous groups did participate in the Morelos movement and other such rebellions. Although many may have been driven by the excitement of these initial events, there is growing evidence which suggests that policies and the changing behavior of the colonial state during the last decades of the colonial period played a definitive role in shaping popular participation in independence movements.

⁴⁵⁸ There are a growing number of studies that address this topic, including Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion*; Susan C. Chambers, *From Subjects to Citizens: Honor, Gender, and Politics in Arequipa, Peru, 1780-1854* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

CONCLUSION

When I initially began this project my intent was to conduct a study of women and gender relations in northern Mexico. During one of several research trips in Mexico I ran across Inquisition records that discussed the prosecution of witches in Coahuila during the eighteenth century. Most of those that were tried were mixed caste women, but the ones who were initially jailed and who were left there to die without being tried were indigenous Tlaxcalan women. In European and North American cases it was usually the weakest members of society who were accused and tried for being witches, consequently I thought that the fact that Tlaxcalans were accused and left to die said much about their place in this society-namely that they were rather low on the social hierarchy. Soon after, I began to look at the history of Tlaxcalans, both in central Mexico and the north, and was struck by the fact that in documents Tlaxcalans often referred to themselves as nobles or *hidalgos*. It was this apparent dichotomy that led to the development of this current study of Tlaxcalan society and identity formation in the north. What happened to the research on witchcraft? Those women have not been forgotten. They were always in the back of my mind as I conducted research and prepared this work. Yet, if this broader topic had not been broached, the story of those Tlaxcalan women would instead have been an analysis of European

views of indigenous and mixed caste groups. So it is that this conclusion will not only serve as a summary of the broader points of this dissertation, but will also discuss areas that need further research and analysis, as there were many.

This dissertation analyzed how the transplanted indigenous community of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala understood their political world and how this understanding shaped their ethnic identity at the end of the colonial period. This process of identity formation shaped their political behavior. By using extensive primary documents this study thus hopes that it contributed to our historical understanding of how broader social forces influence local communities, but also how the interaction between state and society (not just the elites) shaped the colonial world. The Tlaxcalans' lives were deeply influenced by colonial policies, but for most of this time authorities had to respond and devise innovative ways to rule. This was a vastly unequal relationship, but this never dissuaded the popular classes from continuing their struggle. Indigenous people were political actors whether or not they openly rebelled or reacted violently to detrimental policies.⁴⁵⁹ Further research on indigenous society and culture will further support this fact.

One of the areas that will certainly add another layer of complexity to this topic is the study of local religion in San Esteban and Saltillo. Although there were extensive sources with which to study religious practices, there were few

⁴⁵⁹ Sarah C. Chambers writes, "It is not enough to measure the extent of popular participation in the Wars of Independence themselves, because the formation of new states took place over several decades and within legal and cultural as well as military and electoral arenas." *From Subjects to*

that discussed the Tlaxcalans' relationship with the local orders and parish priests. The records from the Iglesia de San Esteban had few historical records. There is information on the brotherhoods, testaments, inquisition records, and mission documents. Further research on the Tlaxcalans' religious life will fill this analytical gap, as it will therefore illuminate how Tlaxcalans' incorporated religion into their identity and how it shaped their political culture.

Land documents will also explain how internal class dynamics within the community of San Esteban developed at this time and perhaps also about women's role in the economic life of the community. This study addressed how land disputes with Spanish landowners and colonial authorities seemingly shaped San Esteban, but not how the internal dynamics of land-holding functioned.

Notary records will also help us understand the Tlaxcalan economy and their economic relationship with Spanish elites and other groups. *Compadrazgo* records described a society with many social bonds, but it was unclear what type of economic relationships existed.

Gender and women's roles also need to be given further attention. Certainly this society was not only divided along ethnic and class lines, but gender dynamics also shaped this world. Women are rarely mentioned in land title documents, for example, but they do appear with great frequency in testament records.

Another facet of this northern society that needs to be given greater attention is the relationship of Tlaxalans with the mixed caste and black population. How did this affect indigenous identity?

Further research on nearby Tlaxcalan communities, as well as the central Mexican Tlaxcalan community, is also necessary. There is evidence to suggest that the residents of San Esteban continued to have contact with Tlaxcala throughout the colonial period. Perhaps indigenous people did have a wider world-view that extended beyond their local community.

One final area that needs further analysis is investigating what eventually happened to the residents of San Esteban after Mexico attained its independence from Spain. There is no coherent Tlaxcalan community in Saltillo today, but there is in the nearby town of Bustamante, Nuevo León.⁴⁶⁰

Finally, scholars have expressed a growing interest in studying late colonial society in order to understand nineteenth century changes, like the development of class-consciousness. It is worth emphasizing that even though the market increasingly shaped peoples' lives, the colonial period was not over- not politically and not in the minds of historical actors. After Independence Liberal governments tried to do away with racial policies that divided society, but they could not do away with the racial ideology that still permeated every aspect of

Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

⁴⁶⁰ See Elizabeth K. Butzer, *Historia social de una comunidad Tlaxcalteca: San Miguel de Aguayo (Bustamante, Nuevo León), 1686-1820* (Bustamante: Presidencia Municipal de Bustamante, 2001).

Mexican society. Race and ethnicity as real and divisive concepts may have had to contend with a growing class-consciousness at the end of the colonial period, but they continued to shape people's interpretive framework. Furthermore, ethnic consciousness was and is as real as racism.

Appendix A

List of Original Tlaxcalan Inhabitants of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala

“First of all the aforementioned D. Buena Ventura de Paz and Francisca his wife with two children, one named Ventura and the other named Antonia who is 12 years old.

And also D. Juachin de Velasco, single with two children named: Juan who is 7 years old and the other Felipe who is two years old.

And also Antonio de Nabeda. And Ana his wife with two children named: Antonio who is twelve years old and Juan who is still nursing.

And also Marcos Tececepoc. And Elena his wife.

And also Francisco Ostotl and Ursula his wife with one son named Bernardino.

And also Morales. And Maria Salomon his wife with one son named Diego.

And also Martin Tequamoni, single.

And also Baltasar Acol. And Justina his wife and one son who is two years old, named Juan.

And also Pedro Dias. And Elena his wife.

And Thomas de Aquino and Madalena his wife.

And Bartolome Chilacatl. And María his wife and one daughter named Mónica who is one year old.

And Juan de la Fuente and Ana his wife with one son named Diego.

And Diego Sanchez and Ana his wife.

And Juachin Grande and Maria his wife.

And Buenabentura Xihtotol. And Maria his wife.

And Gabriel de Xolo and Maria his wife.

And Matias Quahtlapiz. And Ynes his wife and their son named Andres.

And Simon Quaytl. And Madalena his wife with two daughters, one named Maria, and the other Verónia, one is six years old and the other three.

And Alonso Tehuilotl. And Ines his wife with one son named Francisco, who is one year old.

And Dionisio. And Elena his wife.

And Francisco de Poloa and Francisca his wife with one son named Baltasar who is one year old.

And Martin Senpoaltecatl, and Ysabel his wife with one son named Juan, who is two years old.

And Diego de Zamora and Ana his wife.

And Simon Hernandez and Ursula his wife.

And Geronimo Cuahpili and Ana his wife.

And Bernadino Cano, single.

And Francisco Mayaguini and Maria his wife with one son named Francisco who is one year old.

And Agustin Barela and Justina his wife with one daughter named Maria.

And Domingo de Ramos, single.

And Pedro Huchcatlacatl and Maria his wife with one daughter named Ana who is two years old.

And Matías Calderon and Ana his wife with one son who is two years old.

And Antonio Ticatlacatl, widower with one daughter named Bara.

And Antonio Ticatlacatl, and Elena his wife.

And Bare. And the huizol, single.

And Isidro Mahuztli, and Ines his wife with one child who is still nursing named Gabriel.

And Fauian de Aquino, married to Frea., with three children, two of twelve years of age, names Ysabel and Maria and Sebastian who is three years old.

And Bare Tlamacazacatl and Maria his wife.

And Sebastian Toltxintli, and Inés his wife with one daughter named Barbara.

And Francisco Thali, and Justina his wife with one son named Juan who is one year old.

And Miguel Quauhtliyztac, and Ana his wife.

And Juan Bauhtizta, and Ageda his wife.

And Dionisio Axoque, single.

And Thomas de Albis, and Lucia, his wife and Juachin Cacanitl and Elena his wife, with one daughter named María who is one and a half year old.

And Francisco Delgado and Susana, his wife.

And Mateo Cacanitl, single.

And Juachin Chamoltzin, and Ana, his wife, with one son named Pascual who is twelve years old.

And Juan Xihuamani and Ana, his wife.

And Juan Tlacochoin and Ysabel, his wife.

And Graviel Quiyauh, and Ana his wife, and one daughter named Maria, who is ten years old.

And Mateo de Alameda, his wife stayed back in Tlascalá in the neighborhood of Atlhuesá.

And Gaspar Cleofas and Justina, his wife, with two children, one who is thirteen years old named María, and Ana who is four years old.

And Domingo de Ramos, and Cecilia his wife.

And Juachin Quauhuiltzintli, and Agustina his wife.

And Pedro Xiuhtotolt, single.

And Frco. Cuahutotolt, and Elena his wife.

And Baltazar Ozoma, and Agustina, his wife.

And Juan de Molina, single.

And Andres Mazehual, and Luisa his wife.

And Bentura Xochitlanemi and María, his wife.

And Miguel Garcia, and María, his wife.

And Ciriano Hernandez and Maria, his wife, with one son who is two years old named Pascual.

And Andrés Garcia, single.

And Andres Tasamilt. And María, his wife, with one son named Miguel who is two years old.

And Bartolomé Chalchiniuhcoyotl, and Margarita, his wife, with one son who is still nursing.

And Antonio Yaochachalaca and Magdalena, his wife, with one daughter named Catalina.

And Tadeo Secuotli and Martina, his wife, with one son named Gregorio of two years of age.

And Lorenzo de San Francisco and Ana, his wife.

And Antonio Carabagal and Francisco, his wife.

And Miguel de Sárate and Justina, his wife.

And Bentura Nesahual, single.

And Antonio Machimali, single.

And Baltasar de Aquino and Inés, his wife.

And Juan Muños; and Luisa, his wife, with two children one of nine years of age and the other of six years of age.

And Diego Ramires and Isabel, his wife, with one son of ten years of age named Antonio.

And Diego Telles and Maria, his wife, with one son of five years of age named Francisco.

And Diego Sanches, single.

And Bartolome Rodrigues and Maria, his wife, with one son who is eleven years old named Melchor.

And Francisco Xochinenemi, and María, his wife, with one son of two years of age, named Miguel.

And Pedro Torres, single.

And Francisco Yxtecocoztectli and María, his wife, with one son, named Sebastian.

And Melchor de Cárceles and Francisca, his wife, with one son, named Sebastian who is one year and a half old.

And Diego de Cárceles, married with Francisca and one son who is nursing named Juan.

And Fauian Juares and María, his wife, with one daughter who is nursing, named María.

And Fauian de Ribera and Ana, his wife.

And Lorenzo de Aquino and Polonia, his wife, with three children, the oldest of nine years of age named Simeon, the other of five years of ages, named Francisco, and the other Ines who is two years old.

And Sevastian de Ramos, and Lucía, his wife, with two children, one named Pablo, of six years and María of two years.

And Deonicio Coltzin and Ana, his wife, with one son, named Pedro, of three years.

And Francisco Maquelquauhtzin, and Ysabel, his wife.

And Miguel Mixcoatl and María Salomen.

And Juan Gutiérrez and Ana, his wife, with one daughter named María, of one and a half years.

And Andres maldonado and Ana, his wife.

And Bernabel Xiuhtlapoca and Antonia his wife with one son of years of age, named Sebastián.

And Antonio Poc, Ynes, his wife, with one daughter named Salomen, a one year old.

And Antonio Mimich and María, his wife.

And Juan Sanches and Ana, his wife.

And Gaspar Hueuemitchtli, Ynes, his wife.

And Juan de Gante, single.

And Juachin Atoquitla and María, his wife.

And Matias Lolaacatzin and María, his wife.

And Francisco Cozaquahtli, Ysabel his wife.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁶¹ Alessio Robles, *Coahuila y Texas*, 177-181.

Appendix B

Marriage Dispute Documents

"Saltillo, 1798⁴⁶²

Dn. Josef Hernandez Tlaxcalteca legitimo Alcalde de primera ~era de este Pueblo, como mejor proceder de drô ante Vmô paresca y Digo: por quantto Josef Manuel sin poco temor de Dios y a la Justicia trajo de mi casa a mi hija Juan(a) Jacova, por si mismo y respecto de que dho moso no es de calidad de mi hija, y un no procedores y regulares, y visiosos por cuys inquietos no puedo condesender el matrimonio, ni darles permiso, paterno y si ympido y suplico a Umô suspenda dho matrimonio y me entrega a mi hija, para ponerla en estado con persona ygal que assi me parece de justicia con arreglo a la real pramatica de (S.M.) en que proveye los matrimonios desyguales y sin veneplacito paterno por tanto.

A Um^d pido y suplico serva mandar como llevo pedido en que recibire como llevo pedido en que recibire merced de Justicia Juro no ser de malicio y en lo eso?

Señor,

No se firma?

Saltillo

Dn. Josef Hernandez Tlaxcalteca vesino Republicano y autual Alcalde de este Pueblo ante Umô Digo que aviendome presentado ante el Sr. Cura, para

⁴⁶² 1798, AMS, PM, c50, e39, 6f

ympedir el matrimonio que pretende contraer Josef Manuel con una hija mia llamada Juana Jacova, como consta por el Adjuntto memorial al que le puso la razon que U~mo vera a mi hija, se ha manejado con unos procederes desatentos, y regulares, hasta robar a dha mi hija de mi casa y traerla al curatto, por hija cuyo merittos deve ser seberamente castigado a mas de ser un moso visioso que no es capas de sostener las cargas del matrimonio y solo pretendera dejar a mi hija Burlada y a mi descreditado por cuyos motivos suplico a la justificacion de U^m se sirva de declarar no haver lugar al matrimonio que solicita pues no puedo dar mi concentimiento paterno a dho Matrimonio, lo primero por no ser higual a mi hija, y lo segundo por sus yregulares procedimientos y visios costumbres, como lo justificare don testigos que presentare en su juzgado y si por a cosa por muchos ocupaciones no dire lugar a ellos se ha de servir Um^d comisionar al Governador de este Pueblo ante quien presenttate las pruebas que ofresco para calificar el desenzo Justto que tengo para ympedir este matrimonio el que de verificarse se dara en desabenencias y disgustos de mi casa, por lo que suplico a la equitativa piedad de Um^d se sirve declara no haver lugar al citado matrimonio, y dar por libre a mi hija para ponerlo en el cittado con persona de su ygal assi me parese de justicia con arreglo a las causas que le provare ante Um^d por tanto.

A Umd suplico se sirva declarar como pido Juro no se de malicia y en lo eso

Señor

No se firmar

21 de Diz de 1798

Por presentado y admitido en quanto a lugar en d~o: presente la parte los testigos: Y declarasen estos con situacion de Jose Manuel lo que les contase de la desygualdad y en vita de lo que produxecen se provea justicia yo Dn. Jose Miguel Lovo Guerrero Rexn. Alfe Real Alcalde"

"Saltillo 1799⁴⁶³

Don Josef Ramos Tlaxcalteca originario de este Pueblo de San Esteban de Tlaxcala, por mi ya Nombre de mi hijo Juan Calisto Ramos, ante la recta justificacion de U^omo, parentesco y Digo que dicho mi hijo ynducido de su fragilidad, y de los ruegos, maria Josefha Buena, se fueron para la ciudad de Monterrey en donde los fui yo siguiendo en compañia del Padre de la muchacha, y habiendo llegado a la dha carzel, ya ella depositada en cassa de Dn. Xavier Moran, y habiendonos presentado ante el Jues de aquel Partido que enttendia en la causa nos entregaron a mi~ mi hijo, pagando 3 pesos y 1 real del carzelaje, y a Euxeño Bueno la suya, y habiendonos echo cargo cada uno de ellos nos venimos para esta villa en donde el cittado Bueno se presentto ante U^omo a fin de que se obligue a mi hijo a casar con ella, a lo qual no es posible aceder por las Razones siguientes:

Lo primero por que el moso no contrajo con ella promesa de casamientto y solo lo llevo a Monterrey, ystando de ella para ver fiestas y de su fragilidad por conseguir su torpeza, en compañia de otro sujeto que qasi tenia con ella elmismo comercio pues en el Valle de San Pedro habiendo hido el citado mi hijo a buscar bastimmentto se fue la muchacha con el otro algun trecho mas el los volbio alcanzar y si no los hubiera el alcanzado se hubiera hido con el otro hasta Monterrey.

⁴⁶³ 1799, AMS, PM, c50.

Segundo por la citada muchacha a tenido licito tratto aun antes de tenerlo con mi hijo con un sobrino mio y primo hermano del muchacho, y ella misma la confiesa que fue antes; sin advertir con la poca reflexa de que aunque asi haya sido prueba, con su confecion que es si estto, su poco Juicio y ninguna honradez; a mas el parentesco que resultta; pues no pudiera mi hijo casarse con ella sin dispenza cuyo meritos son vastantes porque aunque hubiera echo promesa de casamiento no pudiera ser obligado a el.

Lo quarto que los indios Tlaxcaltecas deven ser protexidos y amparados de todas las Justicias con la distincioni que Nro soberano nos recomienda, y por ser Tlaxcaltecas nos reputamos por Nobles, y no ha de permitir la justificacion de U~mo el que mi hijo por casarse con Estta ser despojado dl privilexio que el Rey Nuestro Señor nos concede, y V~mo como fiel ministro deve apollar, y ampararnos en la presentte causa por tanto.

A V^mo pido y suplico nos vea con la cridad que se nos recomiende y provea como allase por de justticia juro no ser de Malicia y en lo evo.

Jose Juaquin Ramos

Saltillo

22 de Julio de 1799

Visto el merito de Dn. José Joachin Ramos Indio Principal del Pueblo Tlaxcala Pade de Juan Calixto, dandole por presentado y admitido en quanto a lugar en derecho (dro), y atendiendo a los legales fundamentos que preseden para

que este no pueda casarse con Maria Josef Bueno, mando se le dara esta seis pesos en reales con que quede separada de su intencion y hijeta(?) a desdesquitar ó paga lo que deve en la caja de donde le profugó. Y el en dicho Juan Calixto respeto a que con esta exivicion y el castigo que parece haver compungado un delito, y a el de la muger esta prova (proivida?) por la qual a mis(?) doy fue en falta de eno (dinero?) que no lo hay en el termino de la ley.=

M. Matta"

Appendix C

Limpieza de Sangre Documents, Parras 1788

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Pueblo de Santa Maria de las Parras

Año de 1788

Expediente formado sobre repugnar Dn. José Barsela Vermudez Administrador de Real Alcabalas, una constancia de la Limpieza de ser Yndio puro Marcelo Constancio dada por el Señor Licenciado Dn. José Dionicio-Gutierrez Cura por su Magestad Vicario Juez eclesiastico de dicho Pueblo

No. 67

Documentio de Constancia

Marcelo Constancio es Yndio puro sin mezcla de otra casta, y lo mismo su cuñada Maria Dominga de los Reyes y para que conste donde convenga, doy el presente que firmé en este Pueblo de Santa Maria de la Parras, y Febrero veinte de mis setecientos ochenta y ocho. Licenciado Gutierrez.-----

Concuenrda con su original se le dió á Marcelo Constancio que he tenido á la vista de donde por mandato verbal del Señor Licenciado Dn. José Dionisio Gutierrez cura Vicario Juez eclesiastico de dicho Pueblo, lo saqué de certificado. Pueblo de Parras, y Febrero de mil setecientos ochenta, y ocho.-----

En testimonio de Verdad.

Juan de Dios Nuñez Esquibel

Oficio del Sr. Cura

Señor Don Francisco Barela y Vermudes, Administrador de Alcavala.= Mui
Señor mio: Marcelo Constancio Yndio de este Pueblo me pidió constancia de ser
Yndio legitimo que le dí con arreglo á la Real Cedula de su Magestad, y
prevencion de el Excelentissimo Señor Virrey que mandó se diessen de valde por
los curas, quienes no tienen lugar por su Ministerio para costear Certificaciones
en forma, con las formalidades, y costo necesario; y en una quartilla de Papel
segun la pobreza de los Yndios con misma atestigando ser Yndio legitimo como
se manda, y acostumbro de d-- constancia que no quizo admitir el Señor Don
José su hijo legitimo de Vmd que en el dia no sé si es contador, ó titne ya la
Administracion del Ramo de Alcavalas diciendo dicho iba en forma
certificado=Fuera de esta, para un mismo Yndio en cada viagito que hace de sus
Fruteras(?) me molestan con nueva certificacion, por que disen que se nesesita
quedar en la Aduana lo que yo no tengo tiempo para hacer; y creo que Vmd se ha
propuesto molestarme, y molestar á todo el Publico, en cuia atencion dirijo a Vmd
este, para que quede en la Ynteligencia de que yo no doi certificaciones con la
formalidad que pide su hijo de Vmd, ni tampoco mas que que una vez á cada
yndividio de la que se tomará razon en la Aduana, y se le bolverá a la parte para

que la guarde; por que si para cada ventiza de los Yndios he de dar nueva constancia, no tendréotra cosa que hacer que estarme todo el dia registrando Padrones y averiguando la Naturaleza del Yndio, escribiendo Papeles y se quedará el Ministerio sin Sujeto que lo desempeñe habiendo poquisimos Sacerdotes que me ayuden. Y lo escribo a Vmd para que use de el en el Tribunal que á Vmd le paresca y en caso de que Vmd no admita dichos Papeles como lo hé embiado pasará copia autorizada á la comunidad de Yndios, y demás que les comprehenda para que usen con la copia que dexo testimoniada de dicho Papel, de sus recursos, y no me molesten.= Dios guarde á Vmd muchos años. Parras, y Febrero veinte de mil setecientos ochenta y ocho.= Beso la Mano de Vmd, su atento servidor y Capellan.= Licenciado José Dionisio Gutierrez. Es copia de su original que certifico.

Esquibel

Muy Señor mio: en vista deldo Vmd de fecha de ayer Librado al Señor mi antecesor y Padre Don Francisco Barcelá Bermudez, Digo que lejos de molestar a Em., y al Publico, como propone cumpla puntualmente con el desempeño de mi obligacion, en poder Alcavala á Marcelo Constancia, o documentos se logre que acredite la Lexitimidad de Yndio puro sin mezcla de otra casta, y quede para su constancia en esta oficina, estando Um entendido que de no ban-- este en aquellos terminos juntos, donde luego su --- la p--- pagar el Real derecho de Alcavala.

Es

Administrados de Reales Alcavalas, Don José Barela Vermudez= Mui Señor mio en vista de la constacion de Vmd al mio, á su Padre de veinte de el presente, para quitar equívocos, es á la Letra la constancia que di á Marcelo Constancio, y que regularmente hé dado del Tenor siguiente:: Marcelo Constancio es Yndio puro sin mezcla de otra raza, y lo mismo su cuñada Maria Dominga de los Reyes; y para que conste donde convenga doi el presente que firmé en este Pueblo de Parras, y Febrero veinte de mil setecientos ochenta y ocho.=Licenciado Gutierrez.= Que concuerda con el testimonio de el sacado por el Notario publico.= El medio que Vmd há pensado para ahorrarme del insoportable trabajo de dar otros mas solemnes Documentos de los Yndios á cada ventita que regularmente hacen dentro de el lugar, ó sacase fuera; para la Guia de cada carguita de peras, manzanas, ubas, y demas cosillas; o de entidad ó vagatela que venden dexando el documento para su constancia en la Aduana no debió acomodar á los Señores Superiores que mandaros dar Documentos á los Curas; por que para formar de una vez un Padron de los puros Yndios puiera menester dar ese que hacen á los dichos Curas, que podia encargarse á los Señores Alcaldes mayores ô Jueces ordinarios. Y es el caso; que como en todos los Pueblos, y principalmente en este; como Vmd que se há criado en el, le consta de experiencia; se están cassando los Yndios y las Yndias con otras castas, y emancipandose hijos de los

Yndios puros que ellos no lo son por la desigualdad de sus padres, y era menester todos los años hacer nuevo Padron. Y ha de saber Vmd que el Padron que mandó hacer el Excelentísimo Señor Casi-- , me costo más de un año de taréa, y Dinero para purificarlo; y siempre costará muchissimo trabajo el hacerlo, con la pureza que se requiere; por que es muy distinto registrar las Partidas con las citas, y luces que dan los Pretendientes, á ponerse uno á investigar sobre todo el Pueblo: á mas de que siendo el Pueblo que ay hoi, originario del de Tlaxcala del Saltillo; y de otros Pueblos; siempre debe haver innovacion en el Padron annualmente, por los muchos que con sus filiaciones, segun dispone el Excelentísimo Señor Virrey, se agregan de otras partes, y son Puros Yndios.= En atencion á todo lo que ya lo contenido en mi estado oficio de veinte, y á la respuesta de Vmd, he mandado prover un auto para que se le pase testimonio a la comunidad de los Yndios de este Pueblo, de dicho mi oficio; la respuesta de Vmd; y este otro mio; Junto con el Papelito de constancia de la limpieza de Marcelo Constancio, para que si lo tuviesen por conveniente, hagan sus cursos, en la Ynteligencia de que yo no podré dar otro modo de constancia de su limpieza que segun se vé en dicho Papel=Dios Nuestro Señor guarde á Vmd muchos años. Parras, y Febrero veinte y tres de mil setecientos ochenta y ocho.=Beso la Mano de Vmd su atento servidos, y Capellan.=Licenciado José Dionisio Gutierrez.-----

En el Pueblo de Santa Maria de las Parras, en veinte y tres de Febrero de mil setecientos ochenta y ocho. El Señor Licenciado Don José Dionisio Gutierrez,

cura por su Magestad Vicario Juez eclesiastico de dicho Pueblo, y su Jurisdiccion, dixo: que por quanto son demasiadamente frequentes en este suso dicho Pueblo las ventias de Fructos de poca entidad, que - salen a vender los Yndios naturales de el, á otras Partes con Guia de la Aduanas y venden dentro de el ; y asi mismo venta que verifican de otras cosas de mayor entidad, y para cada una de estas ocurren a su Merced por Documento de Limpieza, que los excepciona por sus Privilegios de la contribucion de Alcavalas; de manera; que a cada ventita quieren los Señores Administradores dexan en su oficiana el Documento del Cura, que dá de valde; y un mismo Yndio necesita nuevo Documentos para todas sus ventas: y á mas de eso quieren dichos Señores que se extiendan con todas las formalidades, y solemnidad que se infiere de su oficio de veinte y uno del presente. Lo que es imposible poder dar Cura del Pueblo numeroso, con escacés de Ministros por haver mui pocos en el obispado de Durango, y frecuentemente afligido con Pestes; y conocer su Merced que de lo contrario les exigen á dichos Naturales Derechos de Alcavala como sino fueran tales Yndios. Y esto trahé quexa contra su Merced entre los Yndividuos del mismo Pueblo, siendo asi que es pura imposibilidad el no poderselas dar con la frecuencia, y modo que en la Aduana se piden; y modo que en la Aduana se piden; y no falta de Amor, y compassion para con ellos. Por lo qual debia mandar, mandaba, y mandó se pase á la comunidad de los yndios un testimonio á continuacion de este auto asi del oficio de su Merced de veinte de Febrero dirigido á Don Francisco de Barselay vermudez;

como la Respuesta dada por su hijo Don José Barsela Vermudez, y segundo oficio á dicho Don José de su Merced el Señor cura y Documento dado á Marcelo Constancio; para que en la inteligencia de que su Merced el Señor Vicario no pude dar, ni dará otros Documentos que de el tenor de dicho, y por primera vez á cada Yndividuo; corran primeramente sus oficios sumisos, y reverentes con el Señor Alcavalero, a fin de que admita los Documentos en dicha forma debolviendolos tomada razon; y en caso de que no condescienda, o sufran el pagar Alcavala, o hagan los ocursoos legales, y legitimos á los Señores superiores que les concede su Magestad (que Dios guarde) por sus privilegios con que se ha dignado favorecerlos siempre, on particular Amor entre todos sus leales vasallos. Quedando de este auto, y demás constancia en el Juzgado. Assi lo proveió, mandó, y firmó dicho Señor Cura Vicario Juez eclesiastico ante mi doy fe= Licenciado José Dionisio Gutierrez=Ante mi=Juan de Dios Nuñez de Esquibel=Notario publico.-----

Concuerta con sus originales que he tenido a la vista, de los que para su constancia en este Juzgado eclesiastico lo saqué fiel, y legalmente como lo tiene mandado el Señor Cura Vicario Juez eclesiastico Licenciado Don José Dionisio Gutierrez, como consta de el anterior auto, de que certifico. Pueblo de Santa Maria de las Parras y Febrero veinte y tres de mil setecientos ochenta y ocho.----
En testimonio de verdad

Juan de Dios Nuñez de Esquibel

Notario Publico

Parras y Febrero 26 de 1788

Con el fiscal mayor German Delgado, cerrado se le remitió al cabildo el Auto, y testimonio que se dice antesedente de que certifico.

Juan de Dios Nuñez de Esquibel

Notario Publico

Parras y Febrero 26, 1788

Haviendo ido a la Aduana yo el Notario a entregar el oficio a su Administrados Don José Barela Vermudez, se me dixo no hallarse en el lugar, pues havia ido a negocio preciso el dia de hoi a la Villa del Saltillo, en cuiá virtud se lo entregué en mano propia á su Padre Don Francisco Barela Vermudez, y para que conste puse esta razon de que certifico.

Juan de Dios Nuñez de Esquibel

Notario Publico

Appendix D

1793 Saltillo Census

Occupations in Urban Saltillo, 1793 census (AMS, PM, C43, e1)*

Occupation	Spanish	Coyote	Mestizo	Mulatto	Black	Indian
merchant	22		1			
tobacconist	1					
cashier	9					
Alguacil mayor	1					
Retired 2 nd lieut.	1					
cleric	3					
attorney	1					
architect	1					
Tithe collector	1					
sacristán	1					
comissioner	1					
Court notary	1					
ecclesiastic	1					
Mail courier	1					
Wine merchant	1					
surgeon	1					
barber	1					
silversmith	3					
miller	1					
trader	1					
painter	1					
School teacher	2			1		
Farm laborer	8	2				
fieldworker	103	282	2			17
muleteer	12	10		5		
shepherd	1					
baker	1					
Candy maker	1					
Carpenter	6	1		2		
shoemaker	4	3	1	5		3
blacksmith	3	3				
mason	7	1				
supplier		1	1			2
hatmaker	1					
jabonero	1					
velero	1					
Cigar maker		1				
Leather tanner	1					
coahman		1				

Washtub maker	1					
cook		1				
cowboy						1
Master cantor						1
Singer						1
cantor					1	
miner			1			1
Leather cleaner	2	1				
quarryman	2	1				
weaver	3	3	6	8		2
Day laborer	10		2	1		2
worker	1	1		1		1
señador				1		
servant	1					
No occupation	34	10	2	2		

*Charts included in Leslie Offutt's, *Una Sociedad Urbana y Rural en el Norte de México: Saltillo a Fines de la Epoca Colonial* (Saltillo: Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, 1993).

Occupation	Spanish	Coyote	Mestizo	Mulatto	Black	Indian
Alguacil mayor	1					
architect	1					
weaver	3	3	6	8		2
attorney	1					
baker	1					
barber	1					
blacksmith	3	3				
Candy maker	1					
cantor					1	
Carpenter	6	1		2		
cashier	9					
Cigar maker		1				
cleric	3					
coahman		1				
comissioner	1					
cook		1				
Court notary	1					
cowboy						1
Day laborer	10		2	1		2
ecclesiastic	1					
Farm laborer	8	2				
fieldworker	103	282	2			17
hatmaker	1					

jabonero	1				
Leather cleaner	2	1			
Leather tanner	1				
Mail courier	1				
Mason-brick	7	1			
Master cantor					1
merchant	22		1		
miller	1				
miner			1		1
muleteer	12	10		5	
painter	1				
quarryman	2	1			
Retired 2nd lieut.	1				
sacristán	1				
School teacher	2			1	
señador				1	
servant	1				
shepherd	1				
shoemaker	4	3	1	5	3
silversmith	3				
Singer					1
supplier		1	1		2
surgeon	1				
Tithe collector	1				
tobacconist	1				
trader	1				
velero	1				
Washtub maker	1				
Wine merchant	1				
worker	1	1		1	1
No occupation	34	10	2	2	

Occupations in Rural Saltillo, 1793 (AMS, PM, c43, e1)

Occupations*	Spani sh	Coyote	Mestizo	Mulatto	Castas	Indian
merchant	1					
Farm laborer	229	3	10	4		13
administrator	1					
steward	2					
Hacienda helper	1					
Cattle breeder	1					
miller	7					
carpenter	2					1
blacksmith	2	2				
tailor				1		
Orchard keeper		1				
coachman				1		
shepherd	3	1	2	6		5
pastador	1					
cowboy	4			5		7
midwife			1			
Coal merchant				1		1
Leather cleaner	1					
"Jutir..."		1				
muleteer	14	6	4	7	1	8
Mul., labor, shep loader				1		9
servant	25	18	2	12		47
idler	3		7	7		6
laborer					1	
"en labor"			1			1
artisan						
aperador				1		
Solero mayor						1
Day laborer	3	16	1	12		18
slave		2 [^]				
No information	48	15	2	10		17

*Includes both male and female workers.

[^]It is unclear if this is a typographical error. I have not come across mention of a slave being anything but a mulatto or black.

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Archivo General del Estado de Coahuila (AGEC)-Saltillo

Archivo General de la Nación (AGN)

Fondo de Indios

Fondo de las Provincias Internas

Fondo de la Inquisición

CONDUMEX

Archivo del Museo de Antropología e Historia-Mexico City

Archivo Municipal de Saltillo (AMS)

Benson Latin American Collection-Austin, Texas

Archivo Histórico de Parras

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